EXPLORER

THE MYSTERY BOXES

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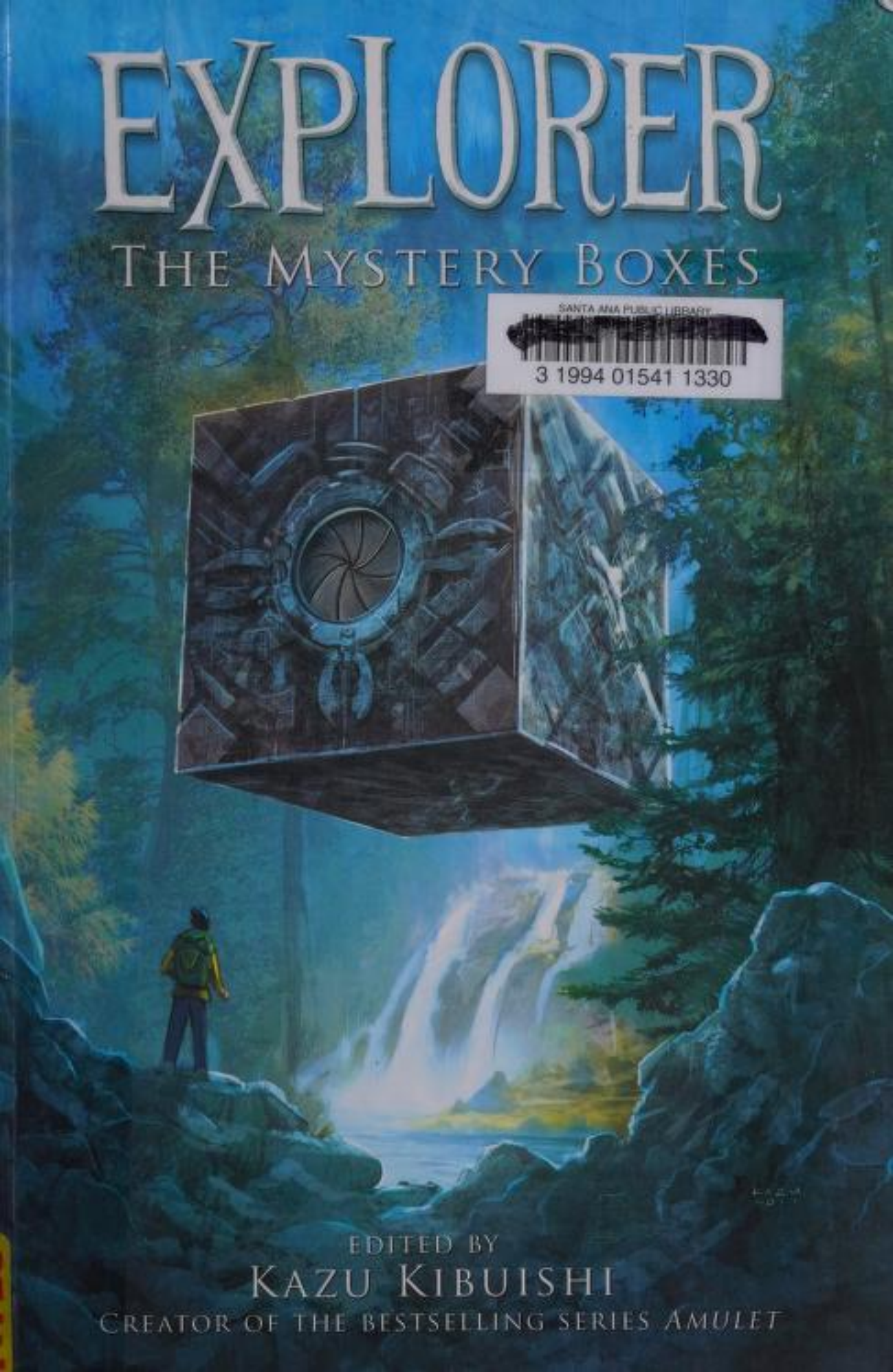

EDITED BY
KAZU KIBUISHI
CREATOR OF THE BESTSELLING SERIES *AMULET*

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EXPLORER

THE MYSTERY BOXES

SEVEN GRAPHIC STORIES

EDITED BY KAZU KIBUISHI

AMULET BOOKS
NEW YORK

UNDER the FLOORBOARDS

BY EMILY CARROLL

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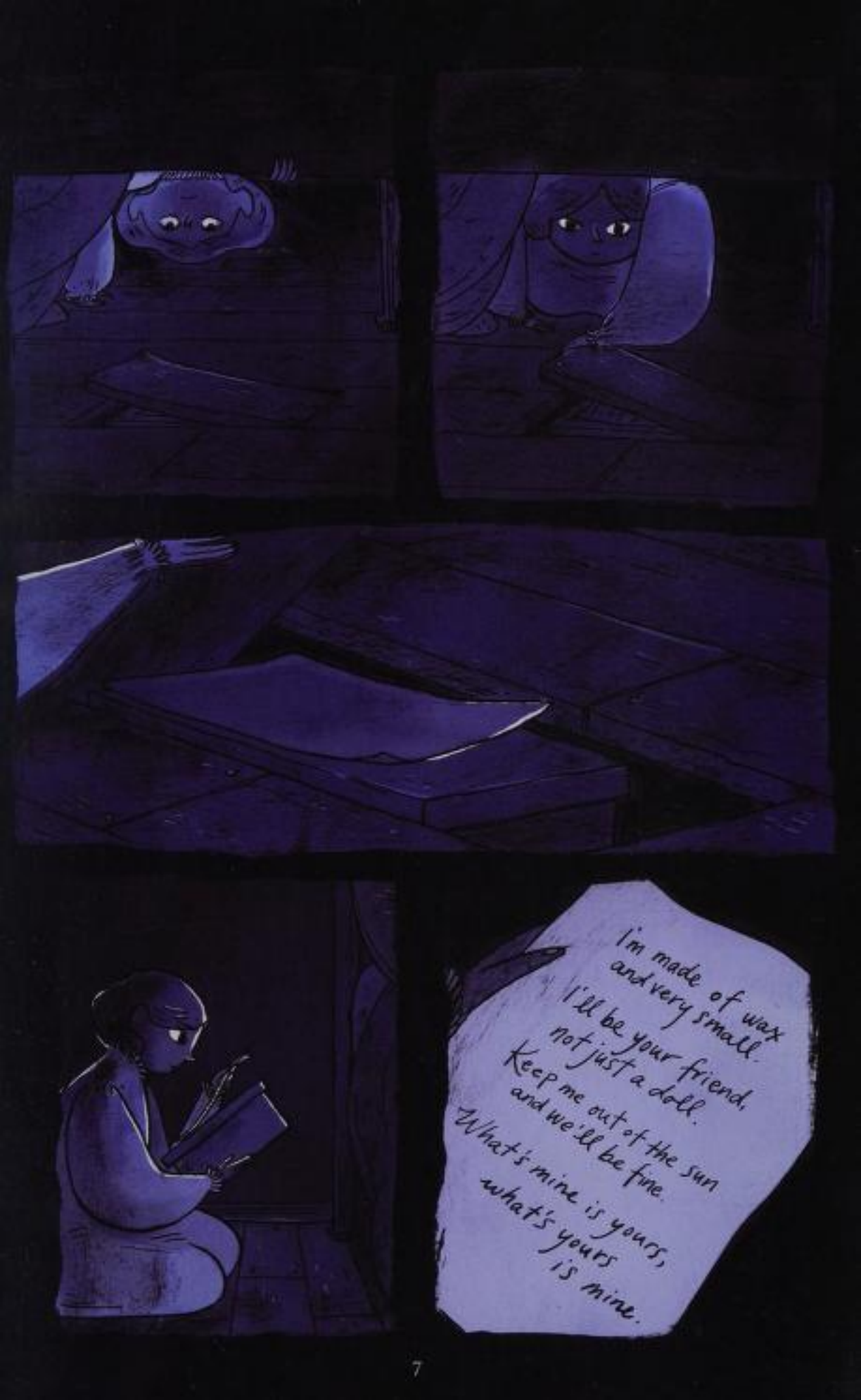
tap
tap


I'm made of wax
and very small.
I'll be your friend,
not just a doll.
Keep me out of the sun
and we'll be fine.
What's mine is yours,
what's yours
is mine.

Don't forget your homework.
And that room of yours is an awful mess.
No going outside until you've tidied up!
...?

tap
tap
tap

Honey, you've been so good with your chores lately.
Why don't you take a well-deserved break?

Don't forget to do the sweeping!

Where do you think you're going?
Just what is this?
This is not how we do our schoolwork.
Try again.

GET IN HERE RIGHT NOW, YOUNG LADY!!!

Clean this up.

And go straight back to your room.

About last night, sweetheart...
I'm so sorry I yelled...
You've been so quiet and well behaved all morning...
In fact, I'm going to bake you a batch of cookies.

Clean up all the mud you tracked in!
What? I just gave you cookies a minute ago!
Go to sleep! I can hear you running around up there!
Who broke all my good dishes?
STOP!

RIGHT NOW.

And go away.

never.

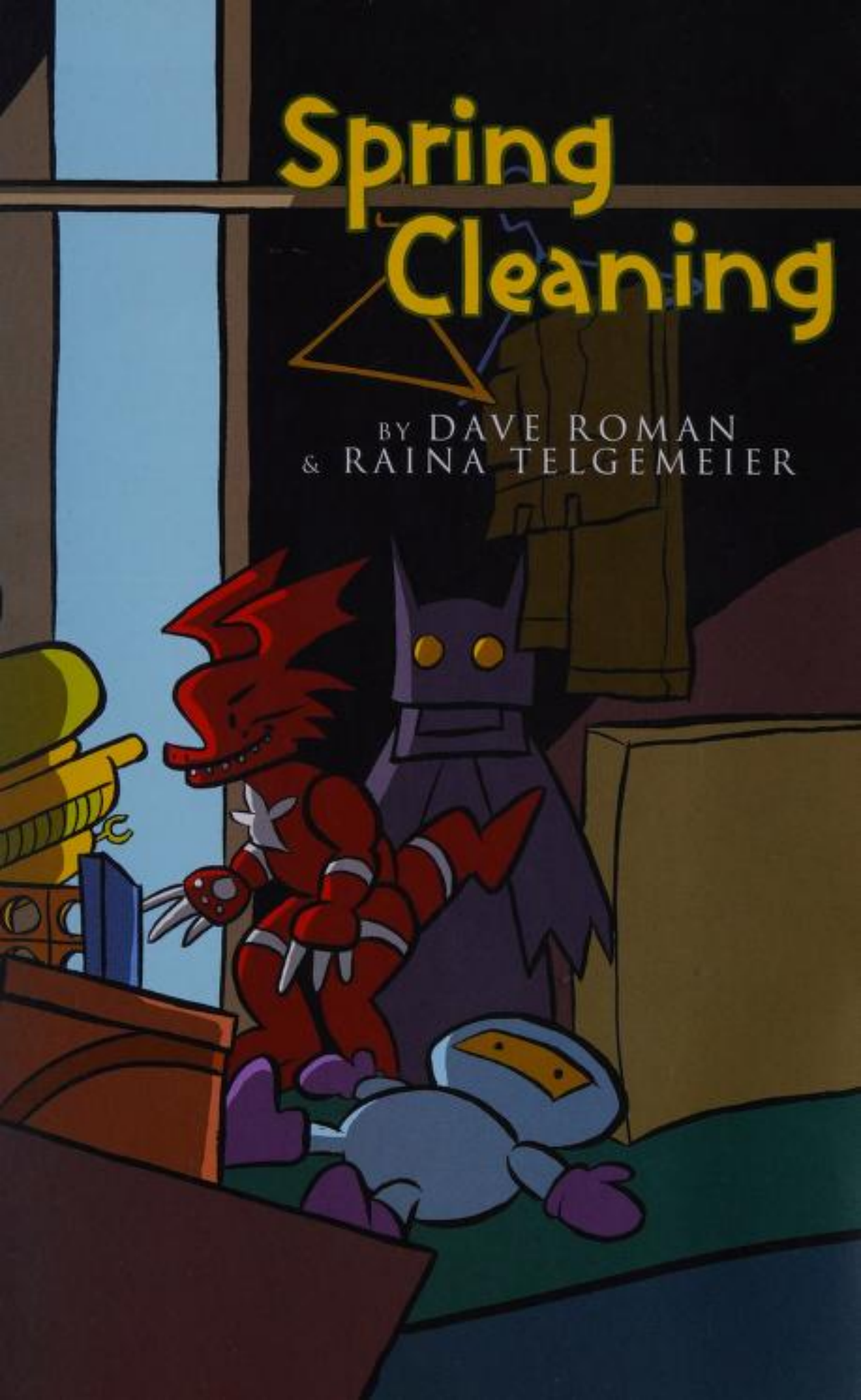
Don't even think about going outside until these dishes are cleaned up!
clik

tap
tap
tap
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUMP
THUD
THUD
THUD
tap
tap
tap

Well, I hope you have a plan for cleaning all that up, too.

Of course.

I've got just the box to put it in.


Spring Cleaning
BY DAVE ROMAN
& RAINA TELGEMEIER

OLIVER, YOU HAVEN'T PLAYED WITH MOST OF THESE TOYS SINCE KINDERGARTEN!

BUT DAD!

NO "BUTS." I WANT THIS CLOSET CLEANED OUT BY TOMORROW.

Y'KNOW, BRO, YOU COULD SELL SOME OF THIS STUFF ON eBUY!

I BET YOU COULD MAKE ENOUGH MONEY TO AFFORD SOME NEW VIDEO GAMES! LIKE SKULLTHUMPER II.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO WANTS THAT GAME...
CLEAN OUT YOUR OWN CLOSET.

?

HEY, ROLAND? DO YOU RECOGNIZE THIS PUZZLE BOX?
NEVER SEEN IT.
SELL IT.

FLASH

UPLOAD

CLICK

DING
DONG

THE BOX! PANT PANT IS IT STILL FOR SALE?
HOW DID YOU GET HERE SO QUICK? I DIDN'T EVEN PUT AN ADDRESS IN MY POST.
UH...I'VE GOT A SPECIAL APP ON MY PHONE? ANYWAY, I'M WILLING TO PAY ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS FOR THAT BOX.
A HUNDRED DOLLARS?
YES! IN REAL MONEY!
I CAN DOUBLE WHATEVER THIS GUY IS OFFERING!!!

SHOVE

SLAM
SO DO WE HAVE A DEAL?
I DON'T KNOW IF–

MADAM! THERE IS NO NEED TO BE RUDE. I HAVE AS MUCH RIGHT TO DO BUSINESS HERE AS **ANY** WIZARD!
WIZARD?!

NOW, SIR. I'M SURE WE CAN COME TO AN **AGREEABLE ARRANGEMENT** IF YOU'LL GIVE ME A BALLPARK FIGURE.

WHAT DOES THE BOX EVEN DO?!

I'VE GOT TWO HUNDRED... DO I HEAR THREE?

WHOOSH
WIZARDS THESE DAYS! RESORTING TO USING MONEY. HAVE YOU NO PRIDE?!

MY GOOD LAD, I'M PREPARED TO OFFER YOU ANY WISH YOUR HEART MIGHT DESIRE! PERHAPS A PET UNICORN?
DOES HE LOOK LIKE THE TYPE OF KID WHO WANTS A UNICORN?

I CAN MAKE YOU **TALLER.** AND GIVE YOU **BAT WINGS!** BOYS **LOVE** BAT WINGS.

THAT'S ENOUGH.
ZAP!

RIBBIT!

UM, MAYBE WE COULD ALL... EXCUSE ME? HELLO?

Hide me, Oliver! These wizards are NUTS!

PSST! HEY, OLIVER!

OH. HI, VALERIE.
WHATCHA GOT THERE?

I'LL TELL YOU... IN YOUR HOUSE, OKAY?
SURE.

MIND IF I TAKE A CLOSER LOOK?
I'M NOT SURE IF...

YOU CAN **TRUST** ME. I'M AN EXPERT AT THESE TYPES OF THINGS.

MY PARENTS THINK I'M CRAZY, BUT I PLAN TO MAJOR IN ADVANCED MYSTICAL RESEARCH WHEN I GO TO COLLEGE.
?

HOW DID THOSE WIZARDS FIND ME?
YOU CAN'T PUT MAGICAL OBJECTS ON THE INTERNET WITHOUT STUFF LIKE THIS HAPPENING.

A LOT OF WIZARDS TROLL AROUND, WAITING FOR LOST ARTIFACTS TO REVEAL THEMSELVES.
Typey
Type
Type

MY GUESS IS THAT YOUR BOX IS ONE OF THESE.
"ENCHANTED WITH LIVING MAGIC, SORCERERS USE THEM TO CROSS INTO VARIOUS DIMENSIONS."

A BOX ONLY WORKS WITH ITS PARTNER. SUPPOSEDLY, THESE MATCHING SETS WERE ALL SCATTERED AND LOST DURING SOME WIZARD WAR BACK IN THE DAY.

POOR THING. ALL THESE YEARS, TRAPPED IN OUR WORLD.

ALL HE WANTS IS A SAFE PLACE TO REST.

THAT MUST BE WHY HE CHOSE YOUR MESSY CLOSET. PROBABLY THOUGHT YOU'D NEVER NOTICE WITH ALL YOUR OTHER JUNK.

IT'S A **GIRL.**

HOW CAN YOU TELL?

I HEARD HER VOICE IN MY **HEAD.**

SHE KNOWS MY NAME!

SHE'S TIRED OF CRAZY WIZARD SHENANIGANS. YOU THINK SHE CAN HIDE OUT HERE?

MY HOUSE IS TOO CLOSE TO YOURS. THEY'LL CHECK HERE EVENTUALLY.

AND AS MUCH AS I LOVE MAGIC, MY PARENTS WOULD KILL ME.

WHAT IF WE DIG A REALLY DEEP HOLE SOMEWHERE...OR HIDE HER AT THE BOTTOM OF THE OCEAN?

"LIVING MAGIC" MEANS IT'S **ALIVE**— SHE COULD SUFFOCATE OR DROWN. PLUS, I READ THESE BOXES GET LONELY BEING ONLY HALF A PAIR. THEY LIKE TO BE AROUND OTHER **STUFF.**

WHAT ABOUT A MUSEUM? OR AN ANTIQUES STORE?

I KNOW!

HI, AUNT ELLEN.

WE'RE GONNA GO DOWNSTAIRS AND PLAY SOME SKEE-BALL.
WHO'S YOUR FRIEND? SHE'S PRETTY.

MAKE SURE SHE DOESN'T TRIP OVER MY PORCELAIN PORPOISES!

WHEN YOU SAID YOUR AUNT WAS A PACK RAT, YOU WERE **NOT** KIDDING.

WHERE SHOULD WE HIDE YOU?

CRASH!

IT'S NO USE TRYING TO HIDE THE BOX! I HAPPEN TO BE A **DETECTIVE** AS WELL AS A WIZARD!
HURRY!

LOOK OVER THERE!

I THINK THEY RECOGNIZE EACH OTHER!

THIS VASE...

IT'S ANOTHER BOX!
POP!

!!!

My love! I'd lost hope of ever finding you again!
Thank you, Oliver and Valerie! Thank you both!

VOOOSH

POOF!

WHAT JUST HAPPENED?
THEY COMBINED POWERS TO MOVE TO ANOTHER DIMENSION WHERE THEY CAN HIDE TOGETHER?

JUST A THEORY.
THUMP

HMPH! CHILDREN, DO YOU KNOW THESE CHARACTERS?

NOT INTENTIONALLY.

MADAM! I AM WILLING TO OFFER YOU **$5,000** FOR THIS ENTIRE LOT OF GOODS!

YOU'RE TOO LATE. THE BOX IS LONG GONE.

$10,000! WHAT DO YOU SAY? YOU COULD BUY TWICE AS MUCH JUNK...ER, **BEAUTIFUL ANTIQUES,** WITH THAT!

ARE YOU KIDDING? THIS PAINTING **ALONE** IS WORTH $10,000!

MINE!
I SAW IT FIRST!

THE END!

THE KEEPER'S TREASURE

BY JASON CAFFOE

SIGH...

I CAN'T BELIEVE THIS.

TREASURE HERE
OF COURSE THIS STUPID PLACE ISN'T ON THE MAP.

WHY WOULD IT BE?

THE DINOSAURS WEREN'T ON THE MAP EITHER.

A LITTLE WARNING ABOUT THEM WOULD HAVE BEEN NICE.

AND MAYBE A HEADS-UP ABOUT THAT REVOLTING, ENDLESS BOG.

AND THE GLACIAL WASTELAND OUTSIDE OF NIGHTMARE VALE.

AND THEN, AFTER ALL THAT, I FINALLY REACH THIS TEMPLE,

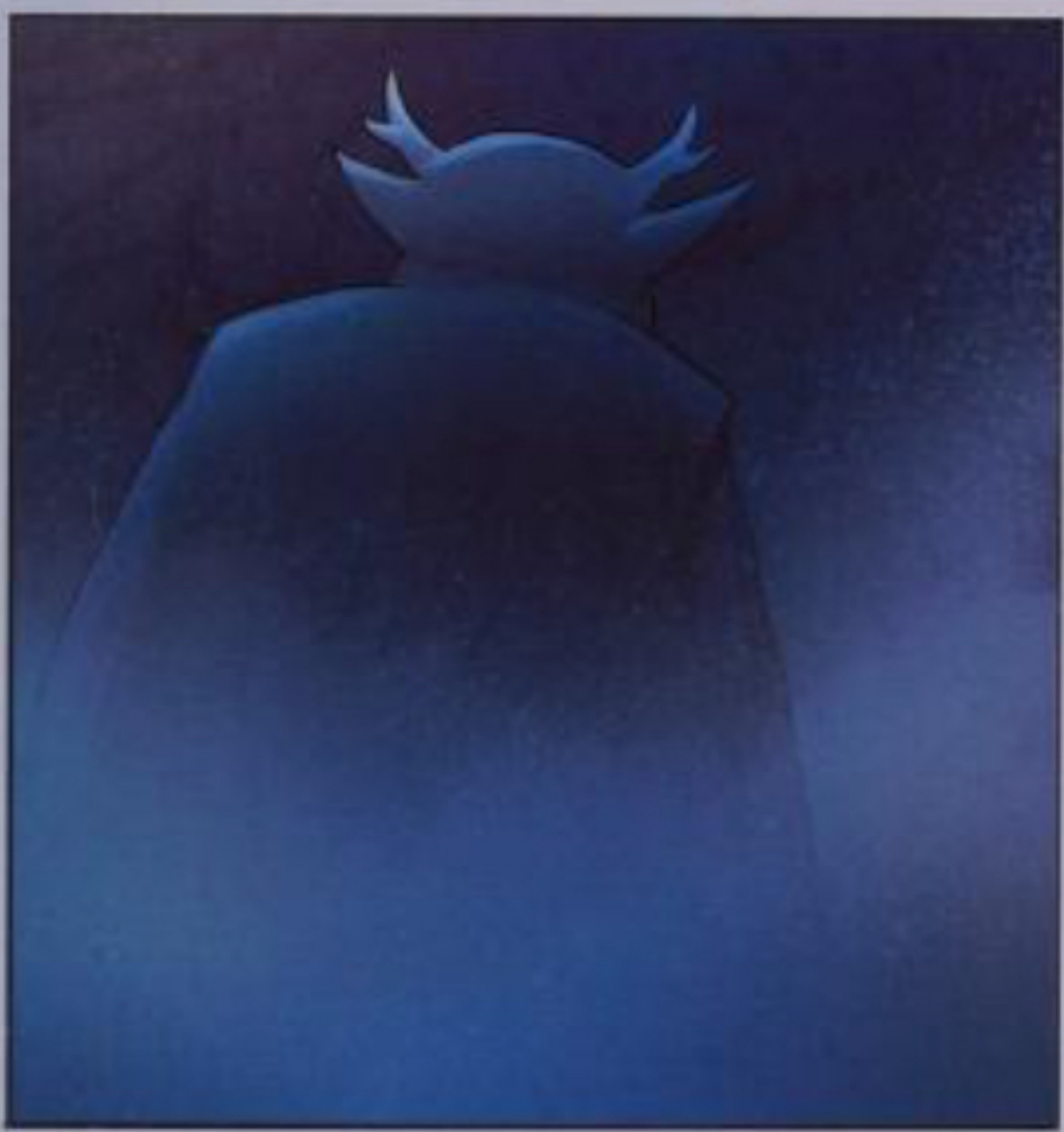
AND I THINK MY TROUBLES ARE OVER!

TREASURE HERE

OH WAIT, THERE'S AN ENDLESS, EMPTY LABYRINTH INSIDE.
MIGHT'VE BEEN NICE TO HAVE SEEN THAT ON THE MAP, TOO.

NOW EVEN IF I MANAGE TO REACH THE TREASURE, I DOUBT I CAN FIND MY WAY OUT OF...

...HERE...



NO, NO, NO, NO, NO!

TRIP!

OOF!

FWIP!

PLINK!
AGH!

EESH!

WHAT'S THE BIG IDEA?!

CAN'T A GUY EVEN SAY HELLO AROUND HERE?

...UM... H-HELLO?

HI THERE! NICE TO MEET YOU!

WHAT BRINGS YOU ALL THE WAY OUT HERE?
UM... I'M LOOKING FOR A... TREASURE CHEST?

A WHAT?

IT'S... LIKE A SPECIAL KIND OF BOX...

OH, THAT!

JUST FOLLOW ME!

YOU KNOW, IT'S BEEN A LONG TIME SINCE I'VE SPOKEN TO ANYONE.
NOT A LOT OF PEOPLE MAKE IT OUT TO THIS TEMPLE,

AND THE ONES THAT DO USUALLY DON'T FIND ME.

I FIND THEM.

HOW LONG HAVE YOU BEEN HERE?
MY WHOLE LIFE.
I'VE WATCHED OVER THIS LABYRINTH FOR AS LONG AS I CAN REMEMBER.
AH, HERE WE ARE!
STAND BACK, PLEASE.
FWEE!

BKOOM!

THAT WAS AMAZING!
THANK YOU!

IS THIS WHAT YOU WERE LOOKING FOR?

IT'S BEAUTIFUL...

WHAT'S IN IT?
I ACTUALLY DON'T KNOW,

BUT IT'S MY FAVORITE THING IN THE TEMPLE.

HAVEN'T YOU EVER WONDERED WHAT'S INSIDE?

OF COURSE!

IT COULD BE FULL OF ANCIENT ARTIFACTS,
LONG-LOST REMNANTS OF AN ANCIENT EXPEDITION.

OR THERE COULD BE A DRAGON EGG INSIDE,
THOUSANDS OF YEARS OLD, BUT STILL HOT TO THE TOUCH,

JUST WAITING TO HATCH INTO A FEROCIOUS BEAST!

OR MAYBE THERE'S A GENIE INSIDE!
AN ALL-POWERFUL BEING,

ABLE TO GRANT ANY WISH OUR HEARTS DESIRE!

THOUGH THE BOX COULD ALSO BE CURSED...

AND OPENING IT COULD UNLEASH A PLAGUE THAT WOULD WASH OVER EVEN THE MOST DISTANT LANDS,
CONSUMING EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH.

OR PERHAPS THERE'S A WHOLE OTHER WORLD INSIDE, JUST LIKE OURS, WITH LITTLE PEOPLE, JUST LIKE US, LOOKING AT A BOX JUST LIKE THIS ONE AND WONDERING...
IT'S GOLD!
HM?
IT'S FULL OF GOLD! PURE GOLD!
OH. HOW INTERESTING.
THIS IS GREAT!
YES, GREAT.

SO, COULD YOU HELP ME FIND THE EXIT?

HM? OH, SURE!

IT'S ACTUALLY NOT AS DIFFICULT TO FIND AS EVERYONE SEEMS TO THINK.

HERE WE ARE! THE EXIT IS RIGHT THROUGH HERE.

YOU KNOW, YOU SHOULD COME WITH ME!

I COULD REALLY USE SOMEONE LIKE YOU, AND YOU'D BE ABLE TO SEE THE WORLD!

OH, NO THANK YOU.

I'VE SPENT SO MUCH TIME IMAGINING WHAT THINGS ARE LIKE OUTSIDE THESE WALLS, THERE'S JUST NO WAY IT COULD LIVE UP TO MY EXPECTATIONS.
AND EVEN IF IT DID, SOMEONE NEEDS TO LOOK AFTER THIS PLACE.

HM.

WELL, THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!
OF COURSE! GOOD LUCK ON YOUR TRAVELS!

POOR GUY...

HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT HE'S MISSING.

-END-

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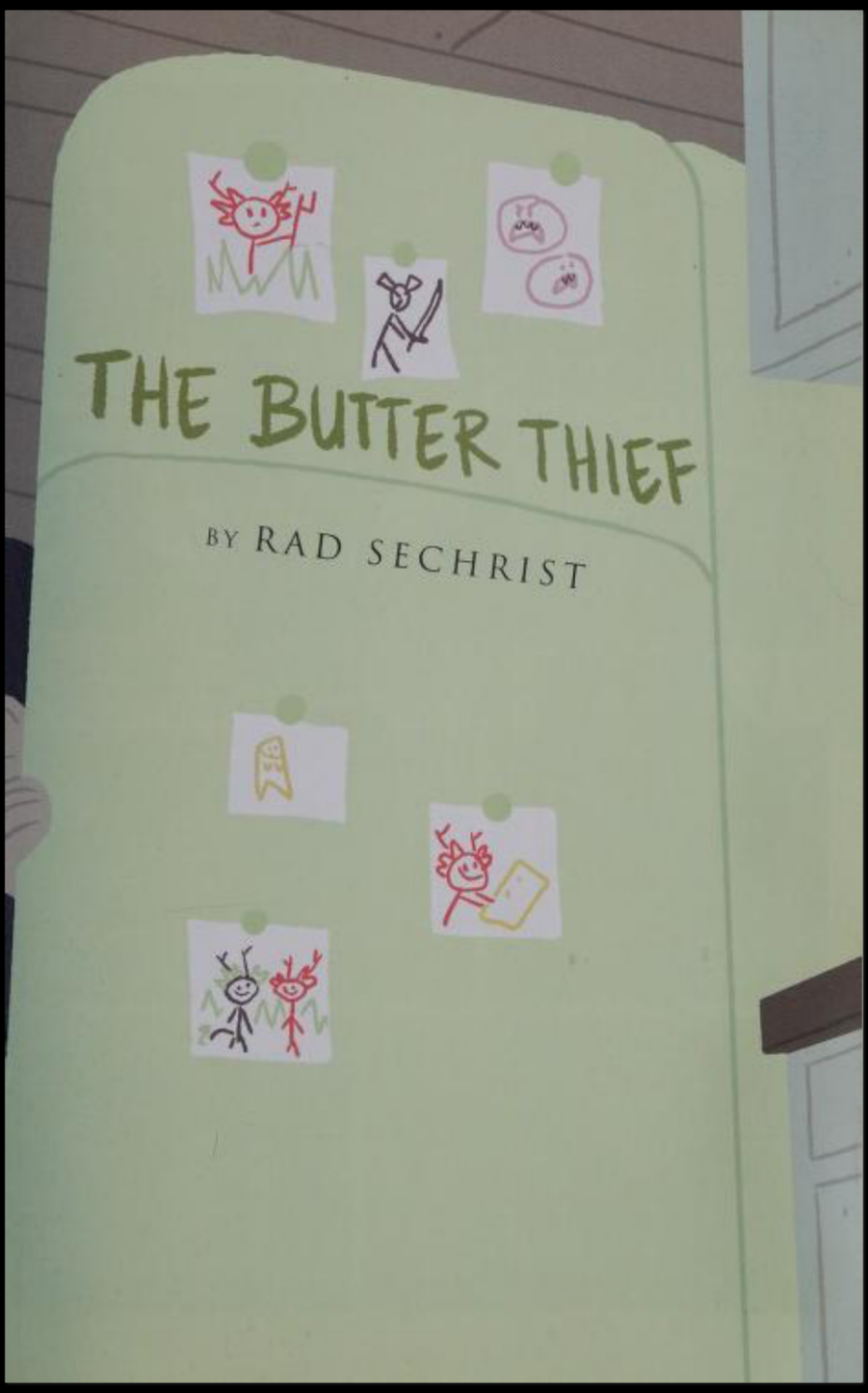

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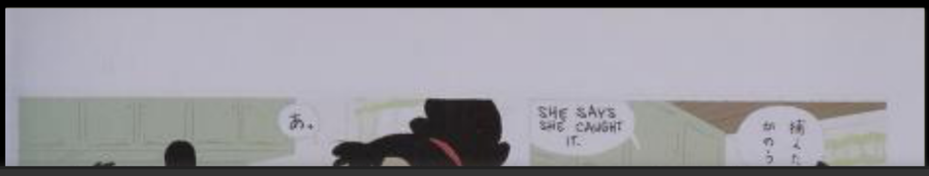

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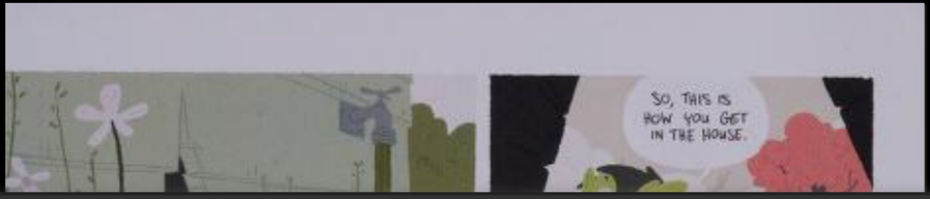

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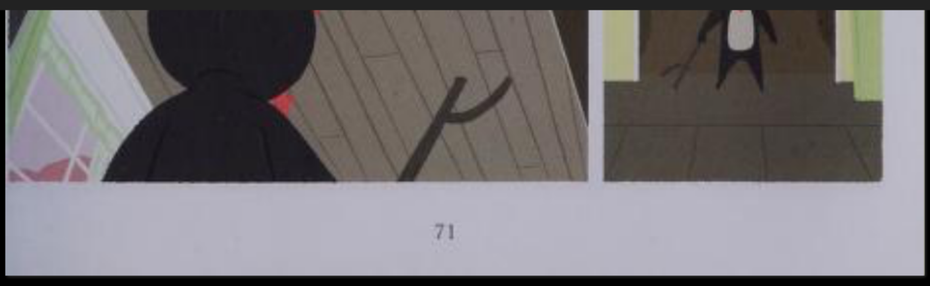

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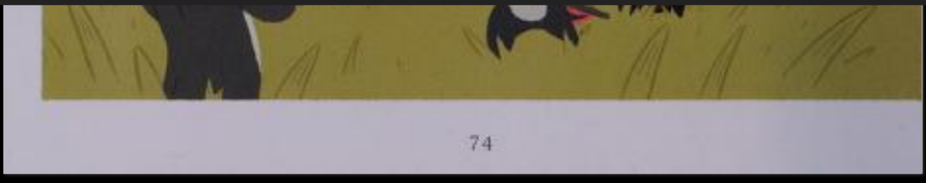

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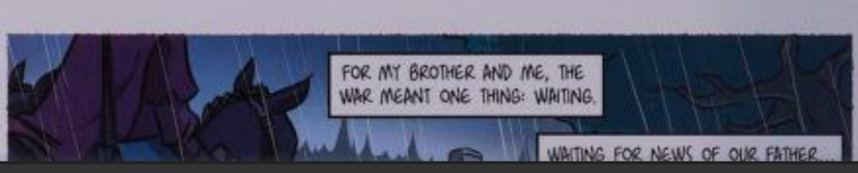
The Soldier's Daughter

BY STUART LIVINGSTON
WITH STEPHANIE RAMIREZ



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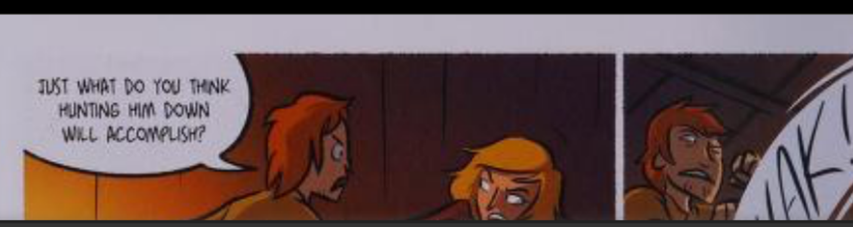

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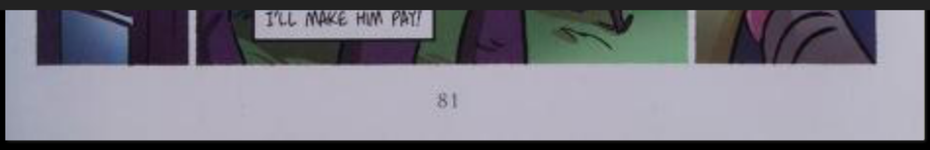

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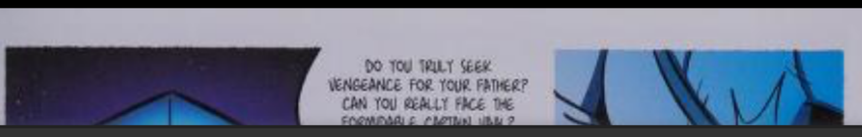

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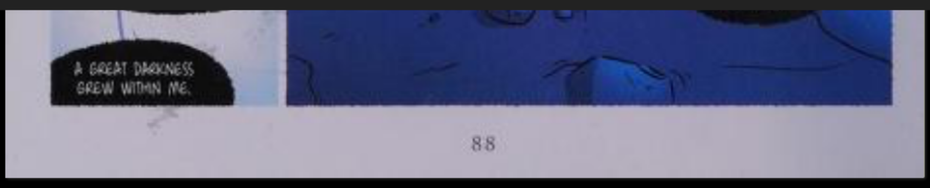

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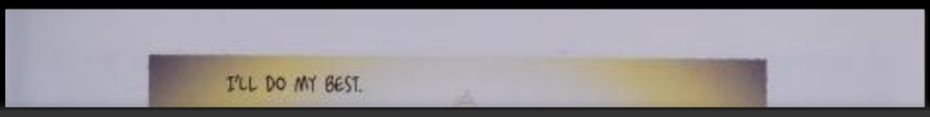

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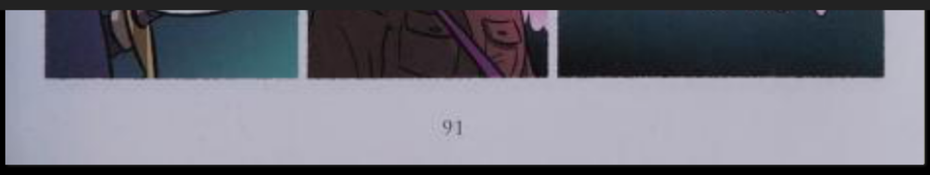

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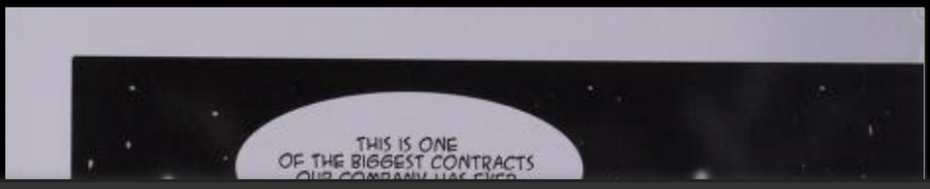
Whatzit

BY JOHANE MATTE
WITH SAYMONE PHANEKHAM



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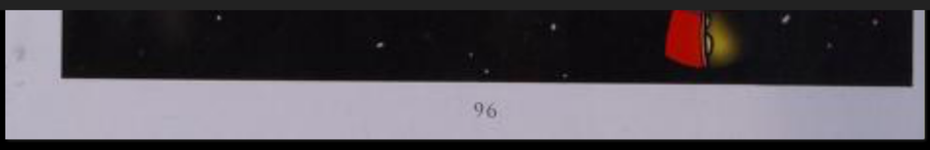

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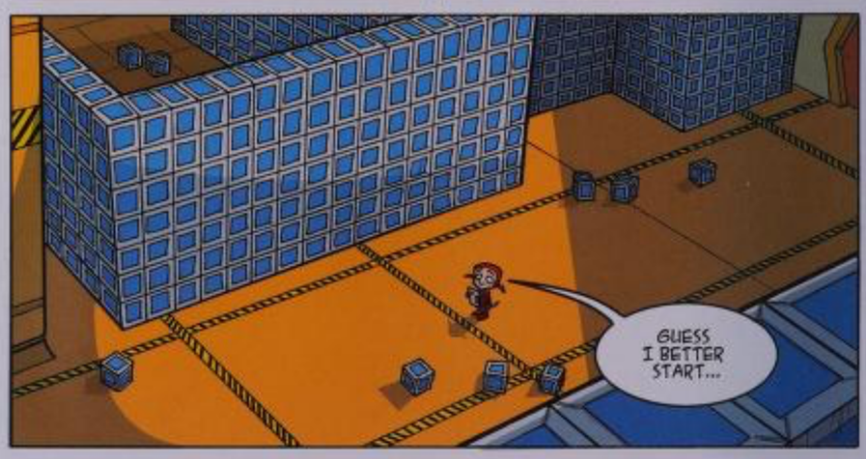

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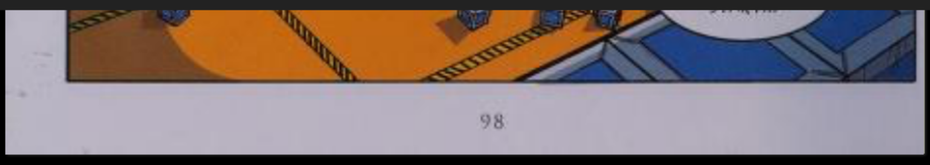

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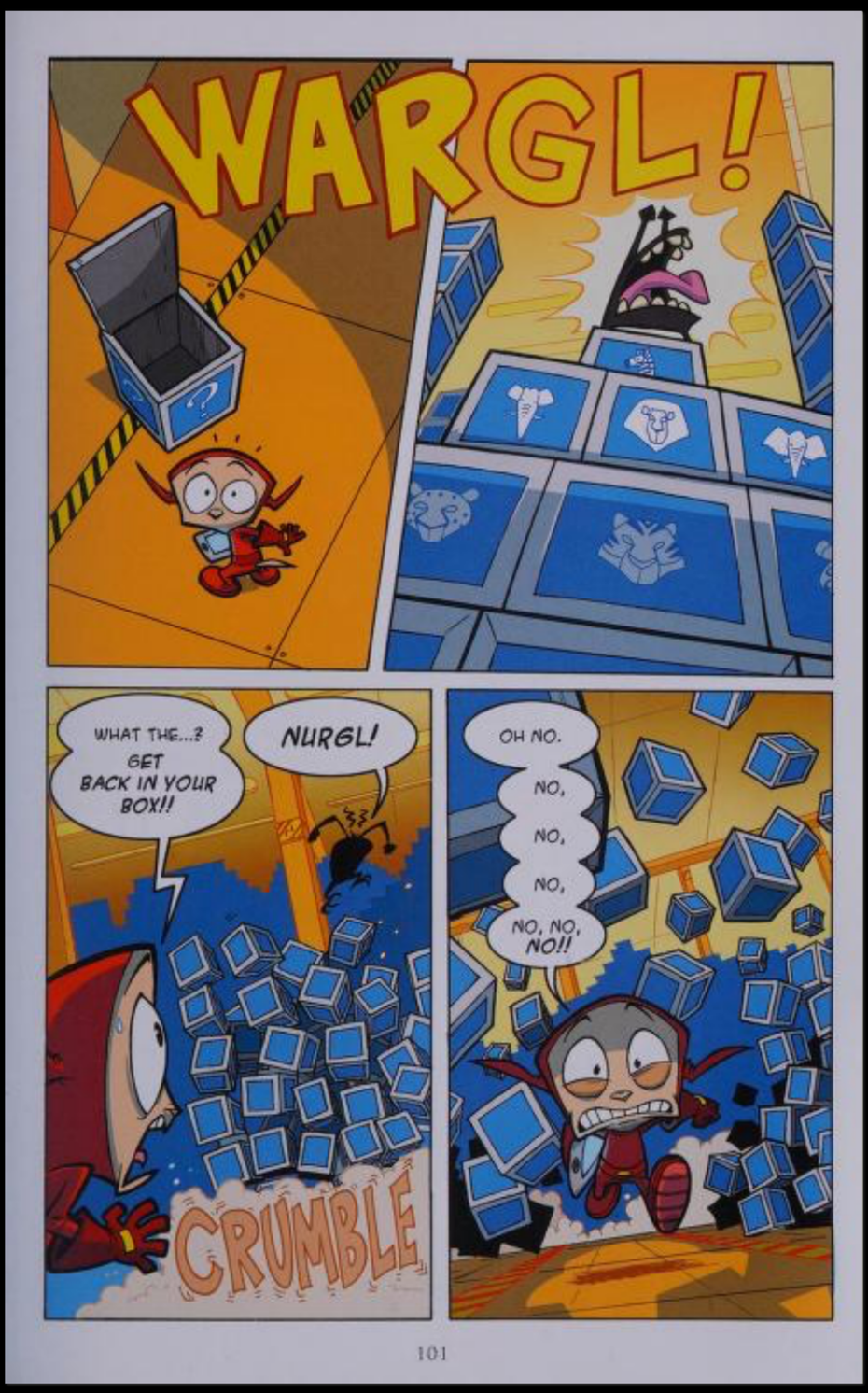

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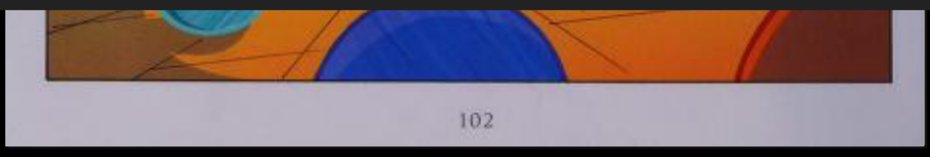

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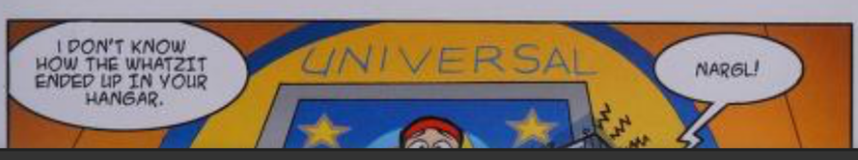

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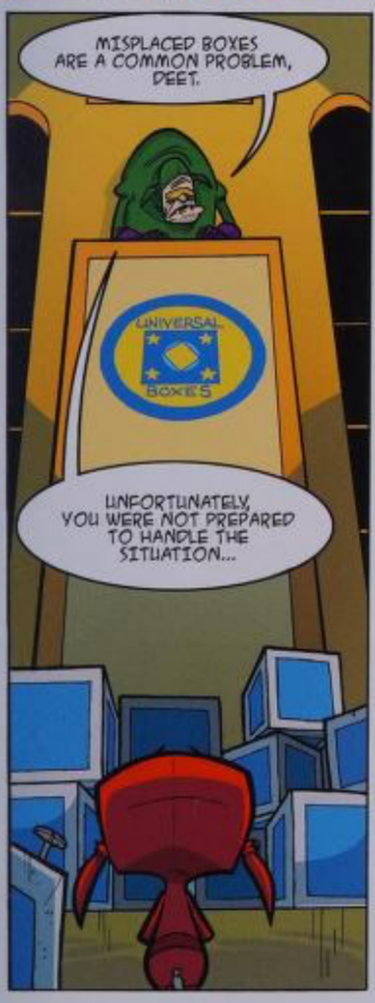

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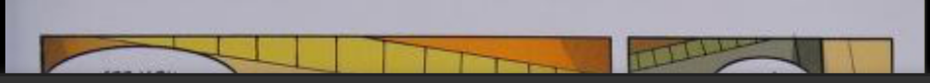

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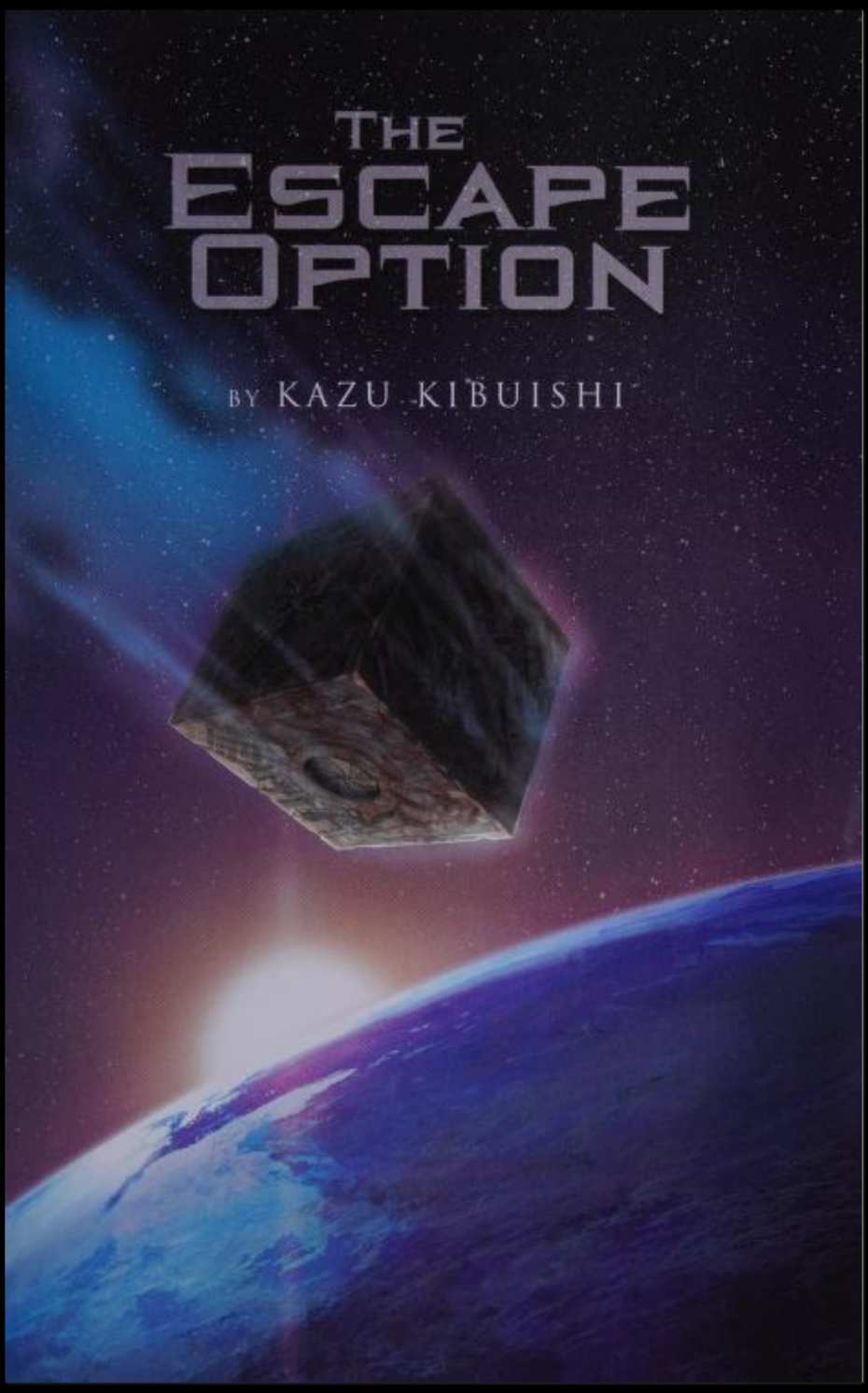

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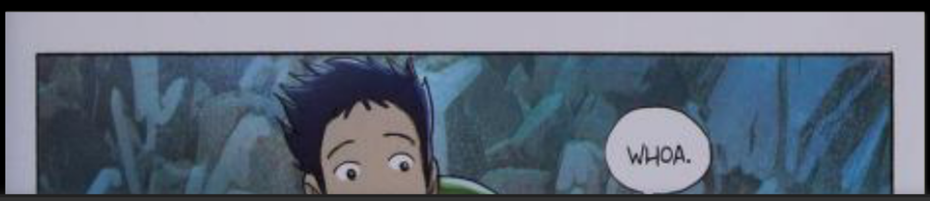

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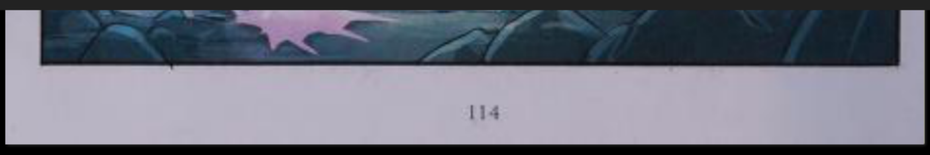

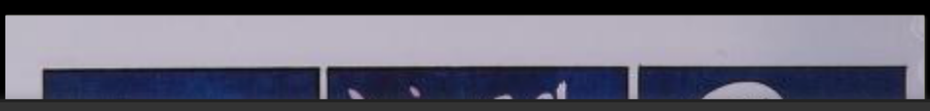

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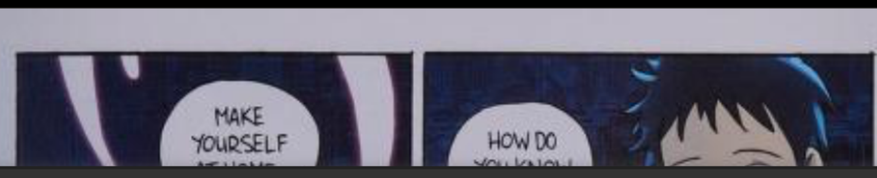

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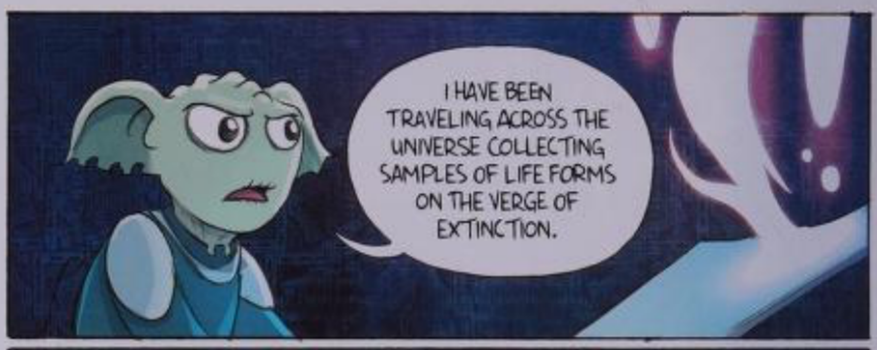

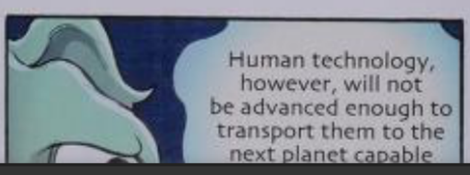

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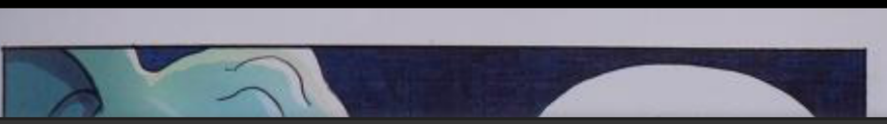

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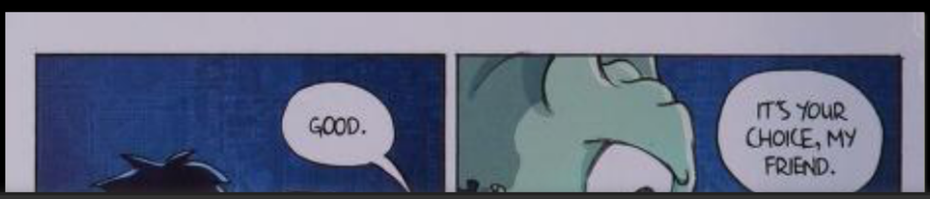

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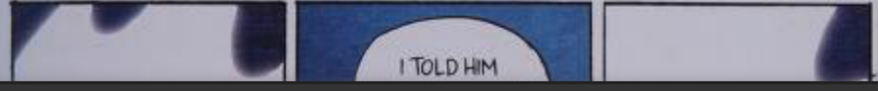

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ABOUT THE CREATORS

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ABOUT THE CREATORS

JASON CAFFOE is a graduate of the Savannah College of Art and Design and a contributor to the *Flight* anthologies. He works as the lead production assistant for Kazu Kibuishi, contributing colors and background art to the *Amulet* series. He also worked on Jake Parker's middle-school graphic novel *Missile Mouse*. Visit him at www.jasoncaffoe.com.

EMILY CARROLL is an up-and-coming artist who works in animation for children's television. She is a contributor to *The Anthology Project*, vol. 2, and her comics and art can also be found at www.emcarroll.com.

KAZU KIBUISHI is the creator of *Amulet*, the award-winning *New York Times*–bestselling middle-school graphic novel series. He was also the editor and art director of eight volumes of *Flight*, the groundbreaking, Eisner-nominated graphic anthology. His graphic collection *Copper* is a Junior Library Guild selection, and his earlier work *Daisy Kutter* was named a YALSA Best Book for Young Adults. For more on Kazu, check out www.boltcity.com.

STUART LIVINGSTON is an American Samoan comics and storyboard artist who lives in Los Angeles. He has contributed to both the *Flight* and *Popgun* anthologies and has produced storyboards for Disney, Warner Bros., Cartoon Network, and others. As a lifelong fan of Japanese RPGs, he was most heavily influenced by games like *Final Fantasy VI* and *Chrono Trigger* while making this comic. Visit him at www.stuartlivingston.com.

JOHANE MATTE has worked as a storyboard artist at Nickelodeon and is now at Dreamworks. Her film and television credits include *How to Train Your Dragon* and *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Her comics work has appeared in several volumes of *Flight*.

DAVE ROMAN is the creator of *Astronaut Academy: Zero Gravity*. He is the coauthor of *The Last Airbender: Zuko's Story* and *X-Men: Misfits* (a *New York Times* bestseller) and also the creator of the teen horror graphic novel *Agnes Quill: An Anthology of Mystery*. Roman is a Harvey Award nominee and an Ignatz Award and Web Cartoonists' Choice Award winner. See more of his work at yaytime.com.

RAD SECHRIST is a cartoonist, a contributor to *Flight*, and a storyboard artist at Dreamworks, where he worked on *Kung Fu Panda II* and *Megamind*.

RAINA TELGEMEIER is the creator of the popular middle-school graphic novel *Smile*, which won a 2011 Eisner Award, a 2010 Boston Globe–Horn Book Award Honor, and a Children's Choice Book Award. She previously adapted and illustrated *The Baby-Sitters Club* into a series of graphic novels. Telgemeier's work has made the YALSA Great Graphic Novels for Teens, ALA Top 10 Graphic Novels for Youth, *Kirkus* Best Books, and ALA Notable Children's Books lists. See more of her work at goraina.com.

* * *

SAYMONE PHANEKHAM helped color "Whatzit." He lives in Montreal, Quebec.

STEPHANIE RAMIREZ helped write and color "The Soldier's Daughter." She lives in Los Angeles, where she works as an illustrator and character designer in animation.

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—K. K.

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2013935794

Paperback ISBN 978-1-4197-0883-1
Hardcover ISBN 978-1-4197-0881-7

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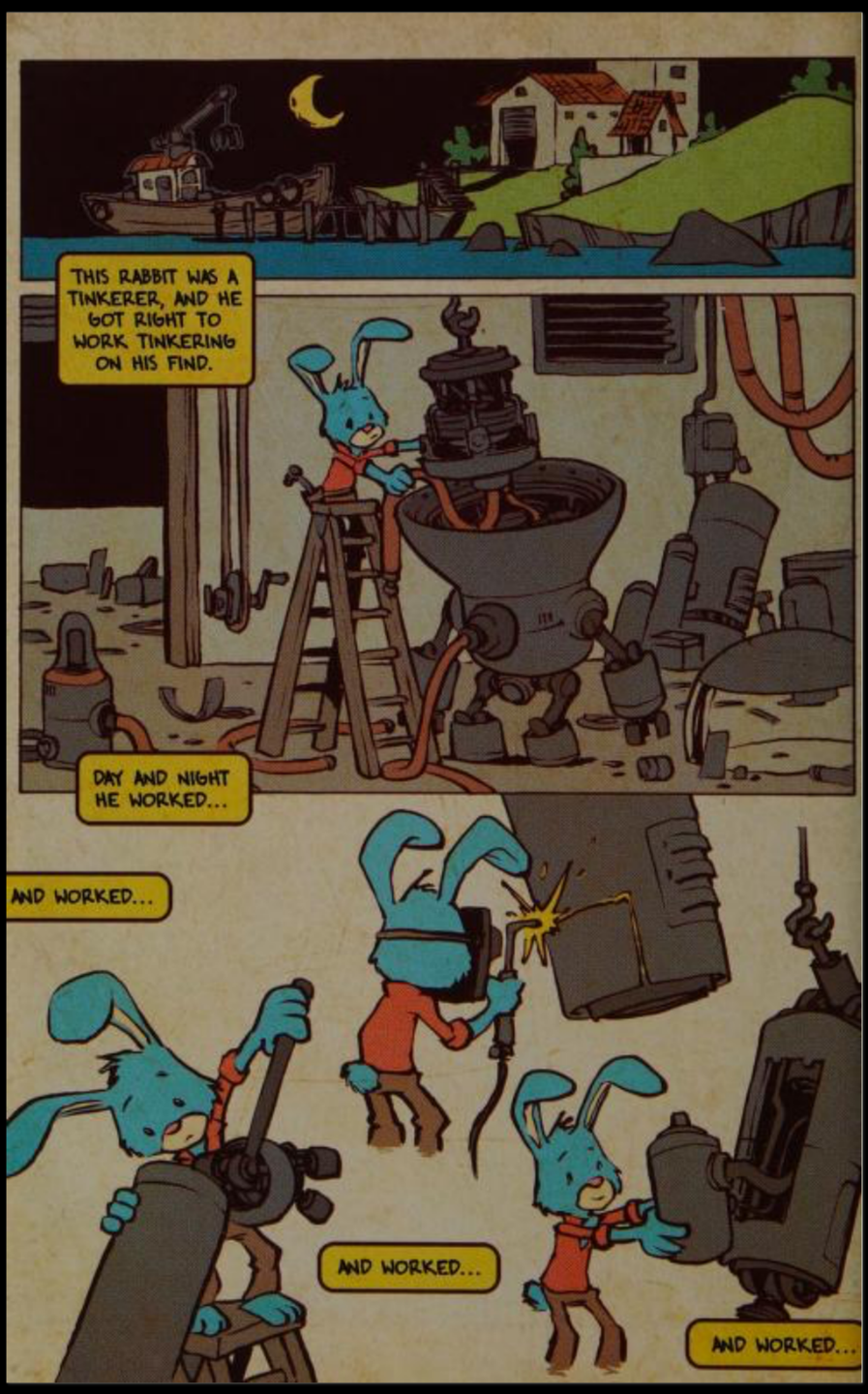

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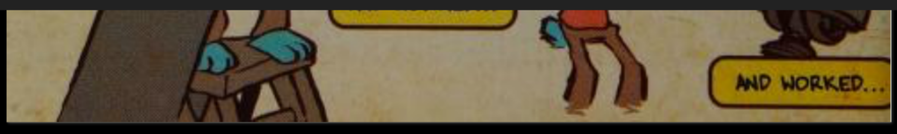

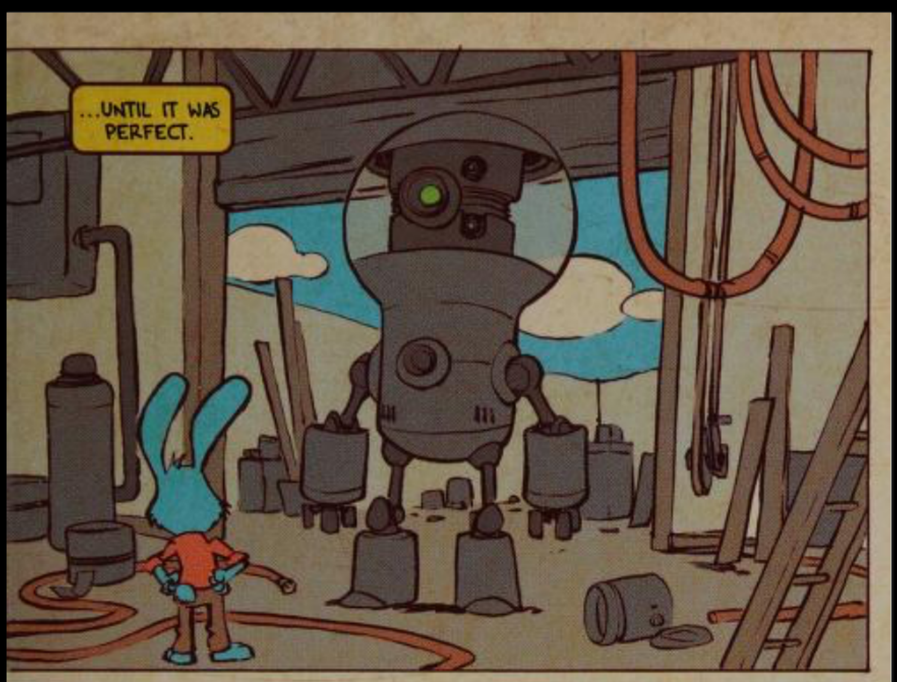

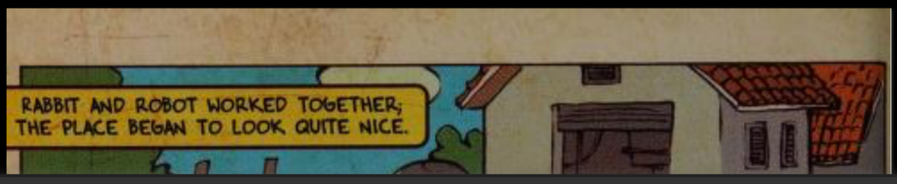

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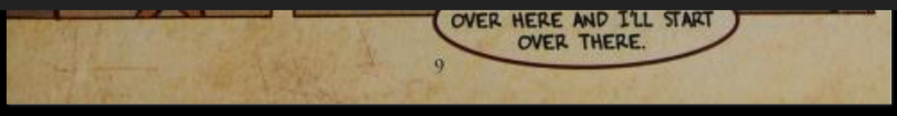

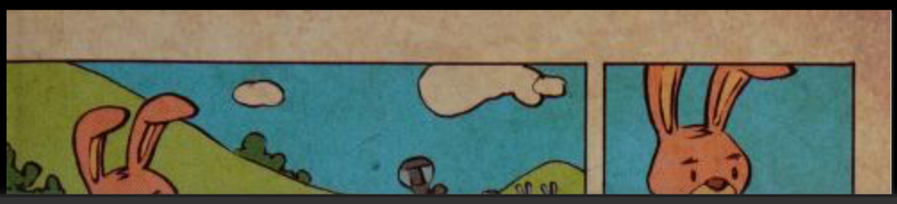

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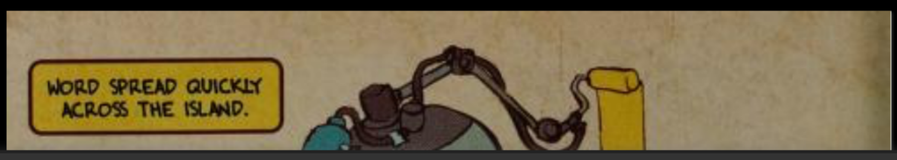

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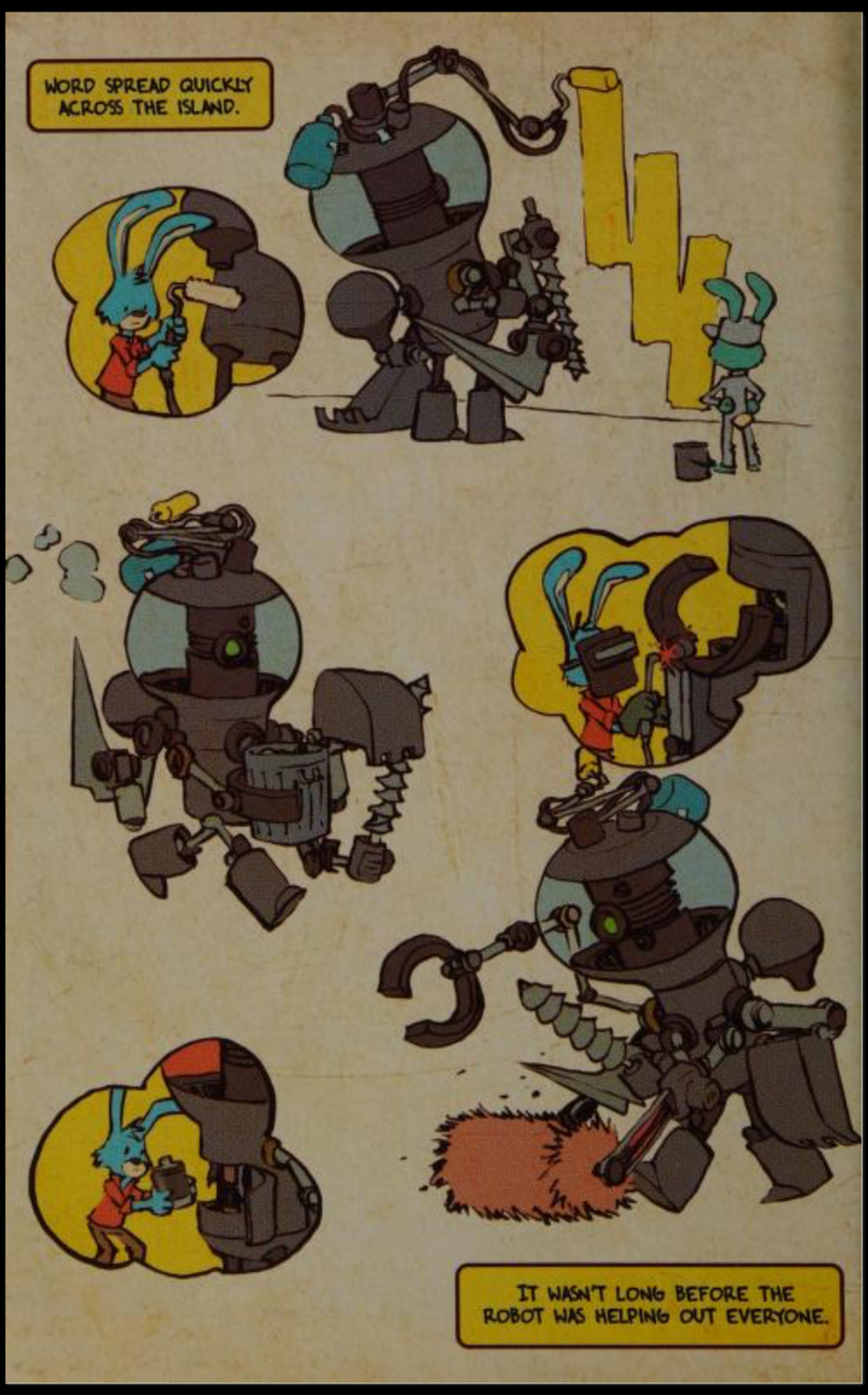

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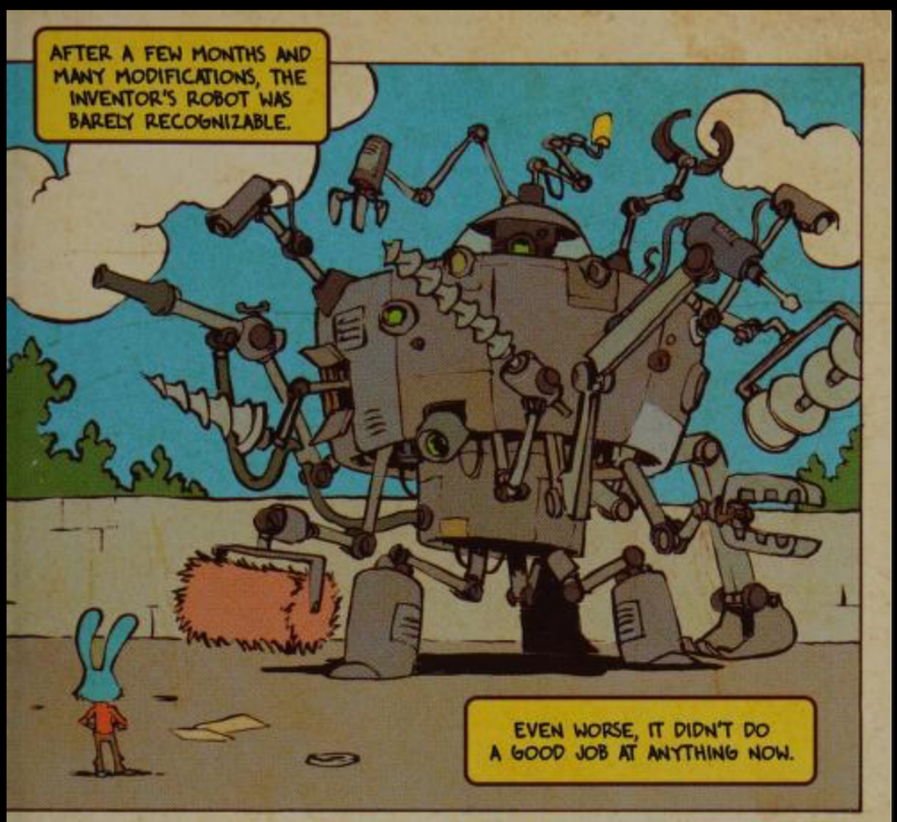

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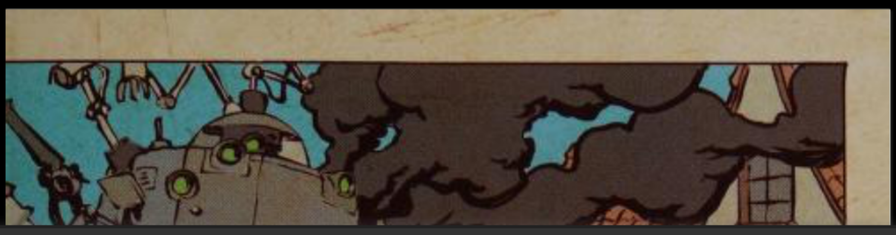

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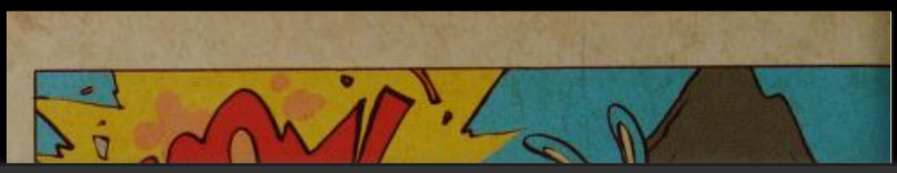

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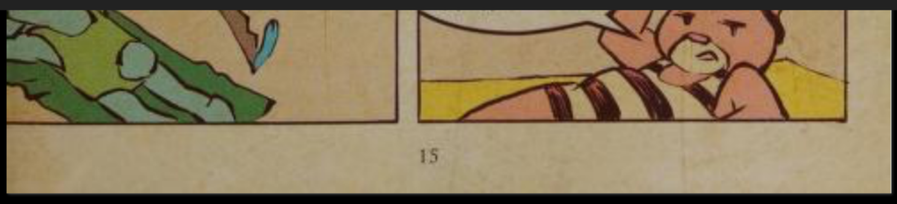

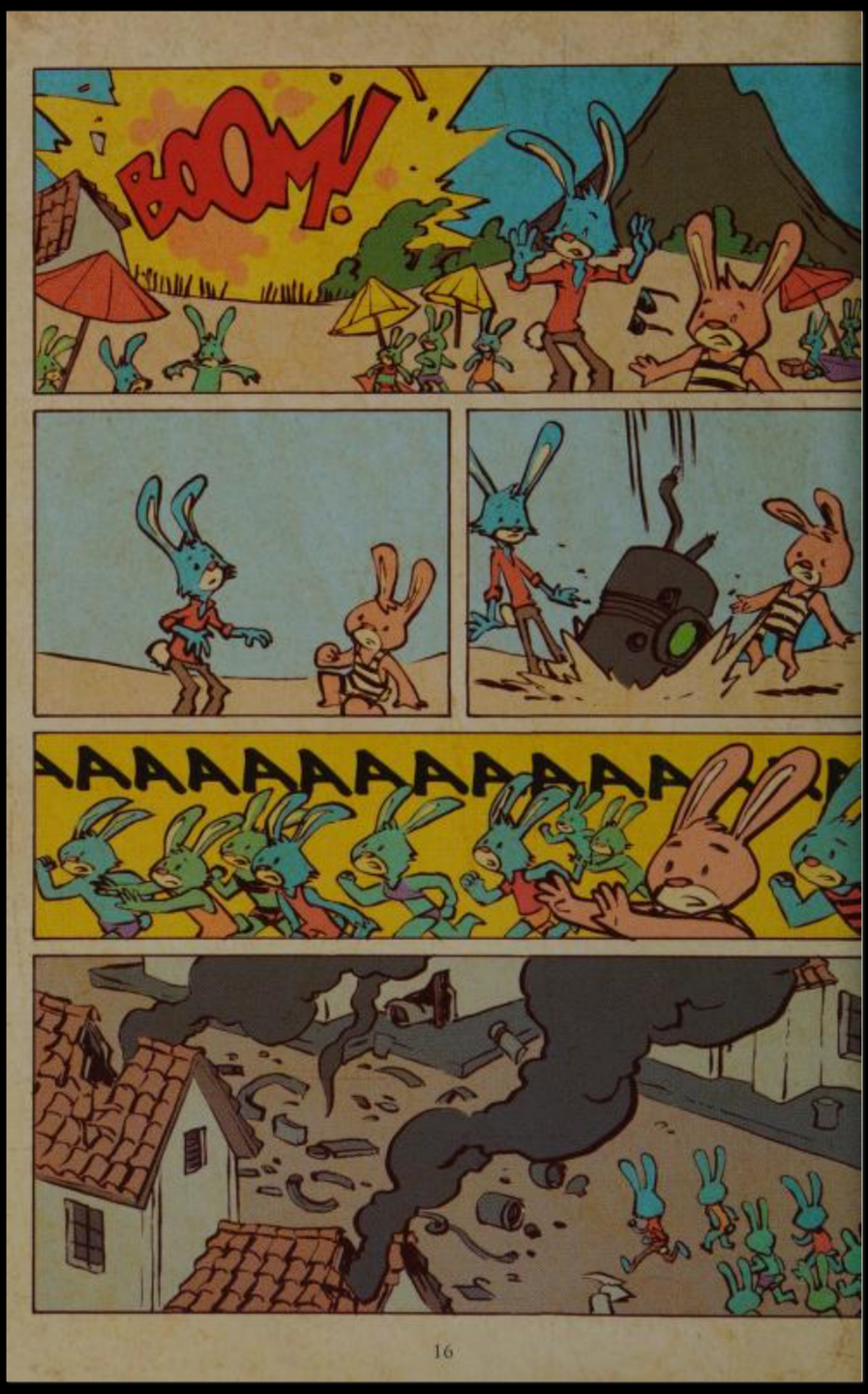

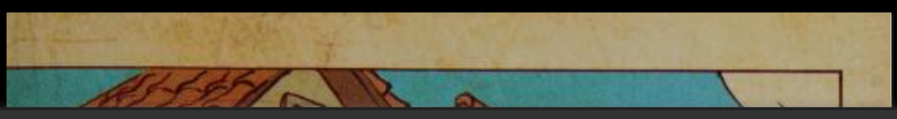

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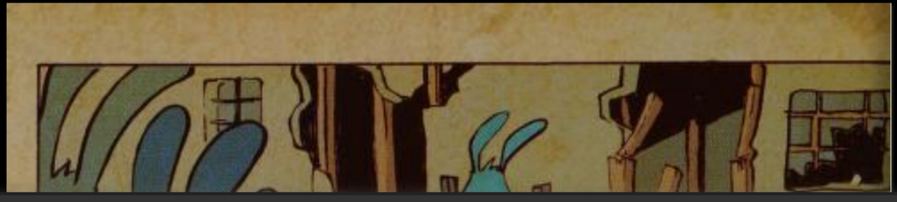

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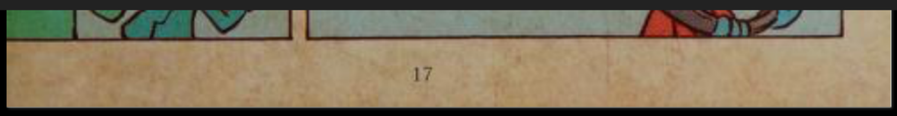

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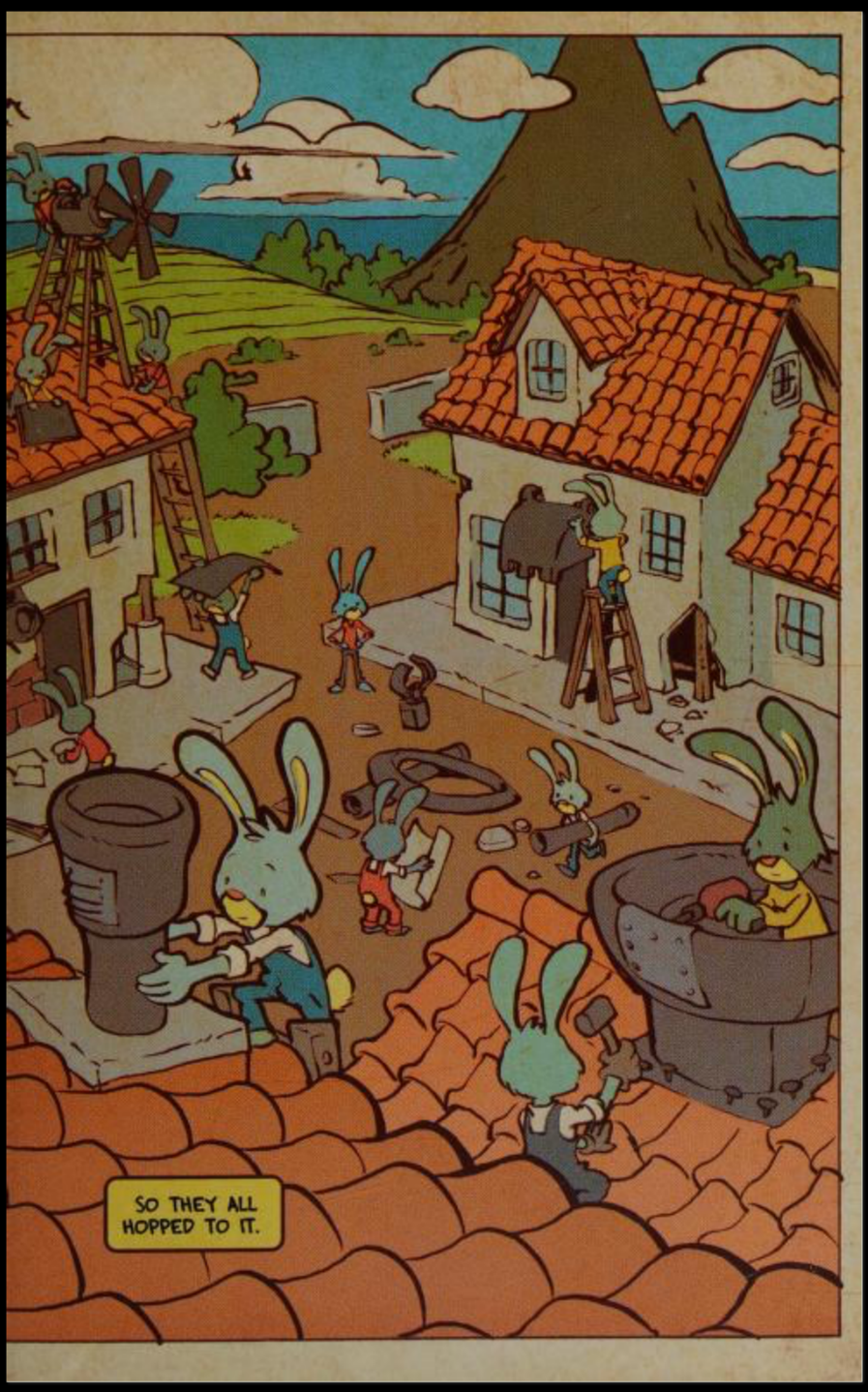

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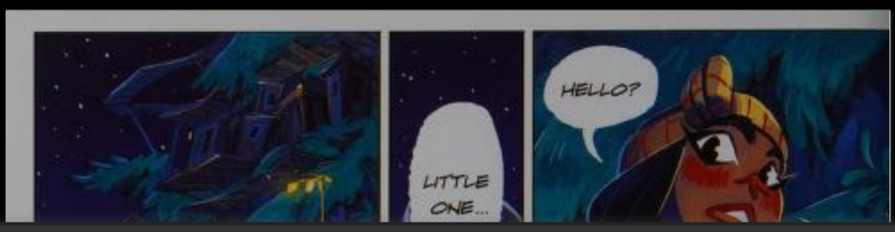

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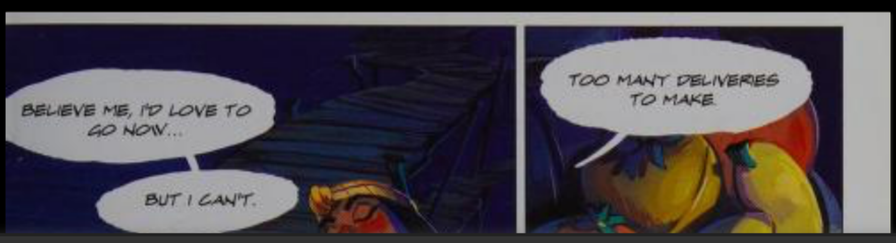

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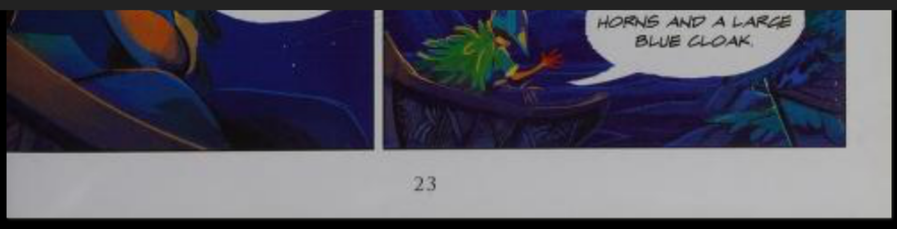

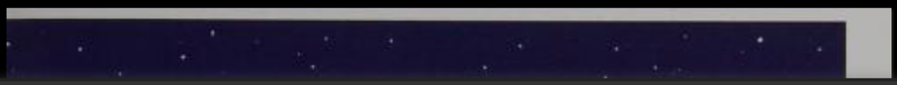

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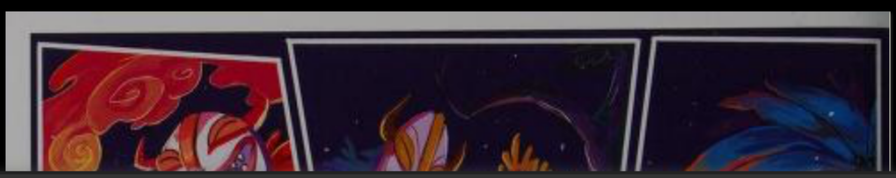

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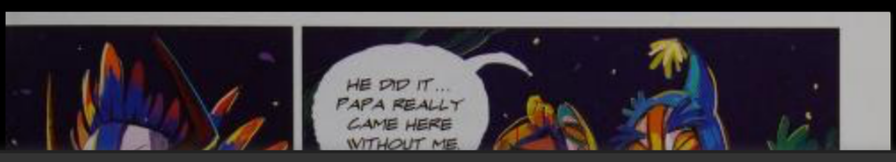

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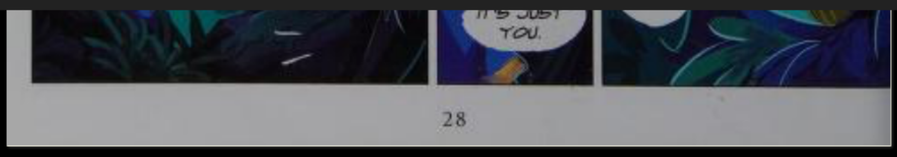

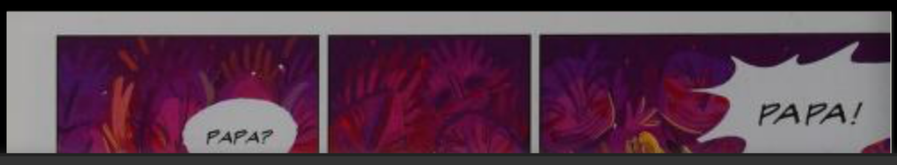

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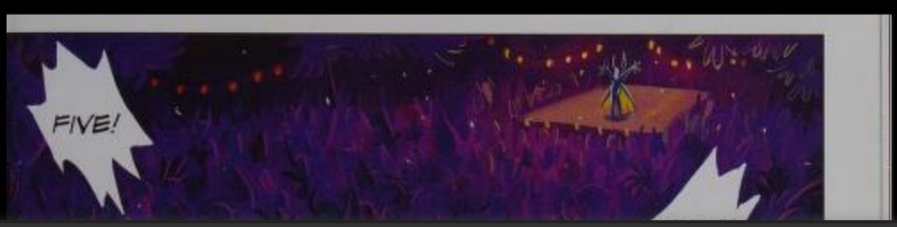

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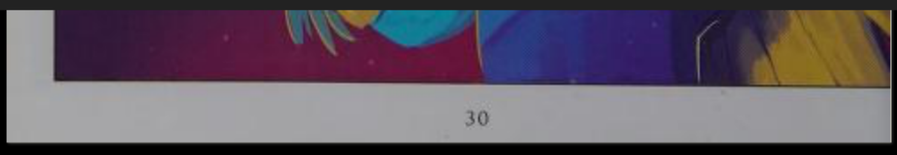

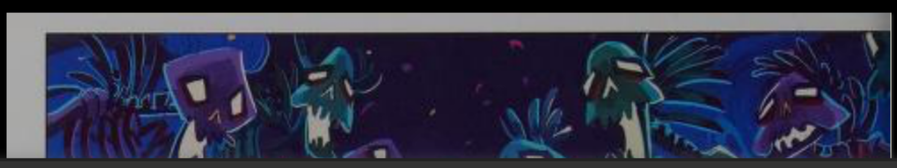

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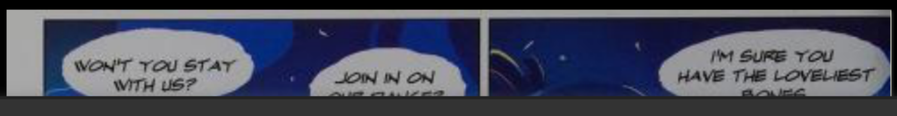

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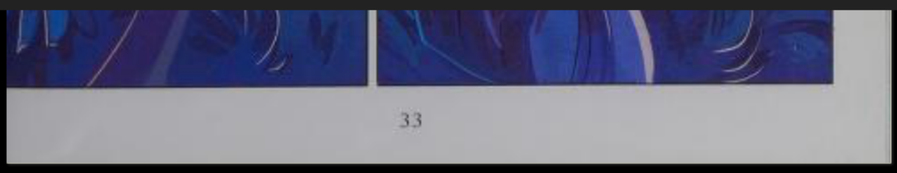

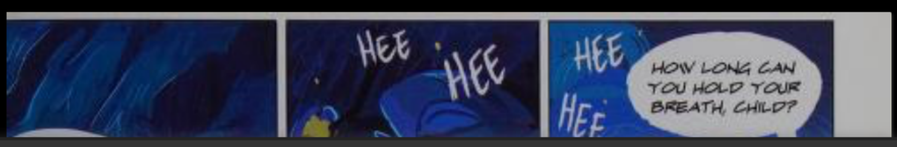

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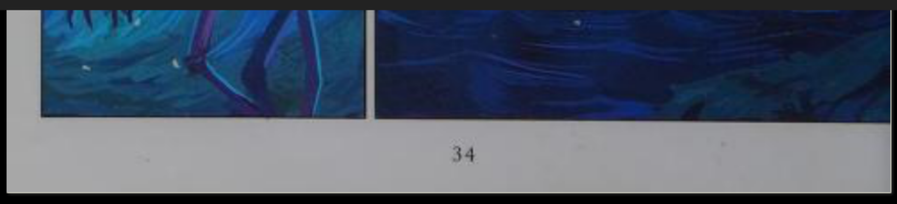

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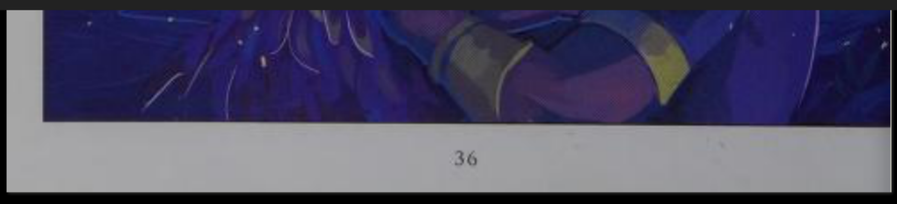

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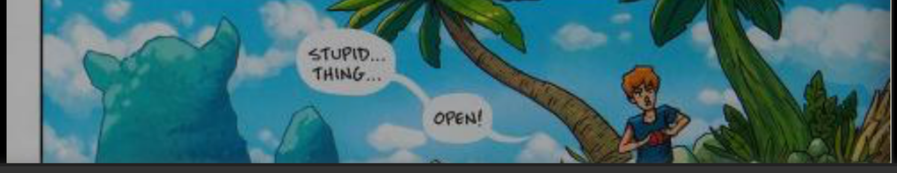
BY JASON CAFFOE



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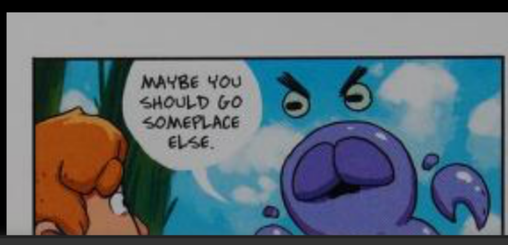

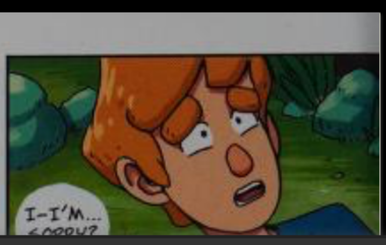

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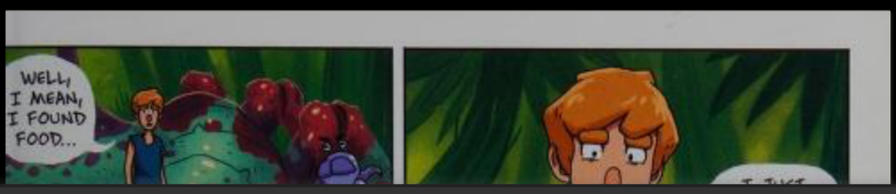

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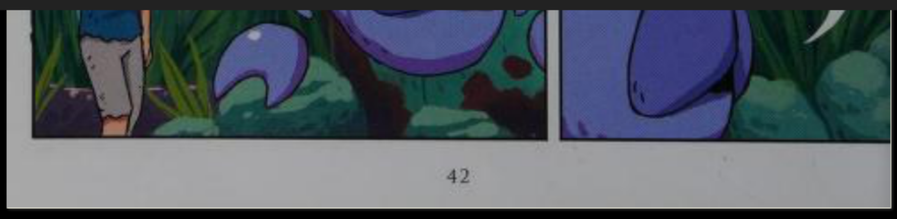

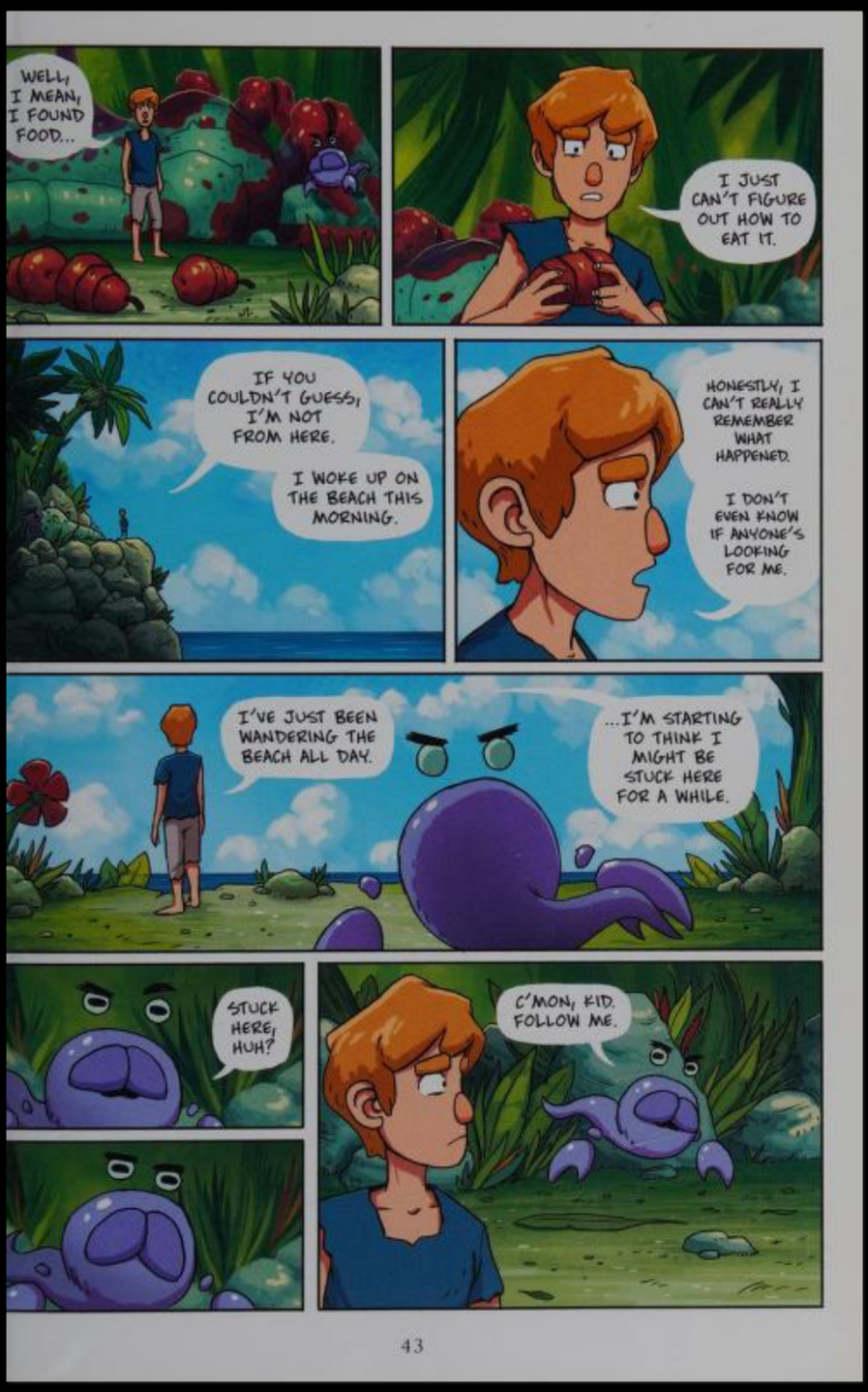

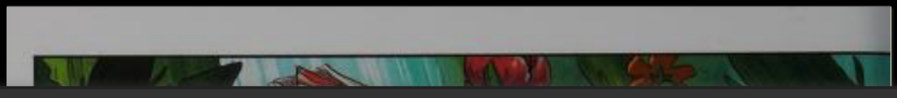

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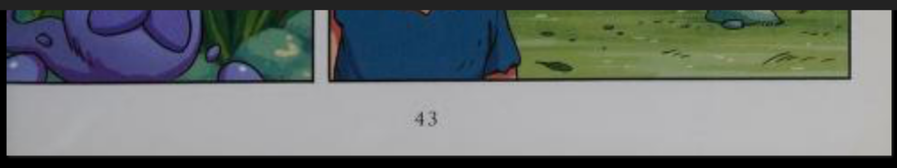

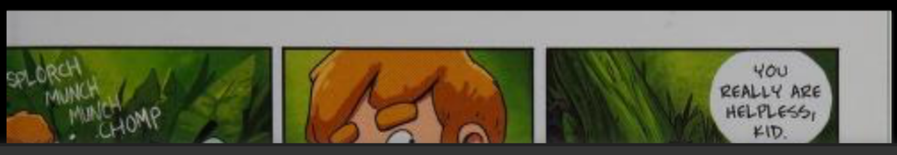

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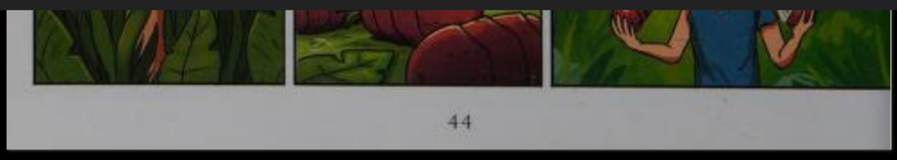

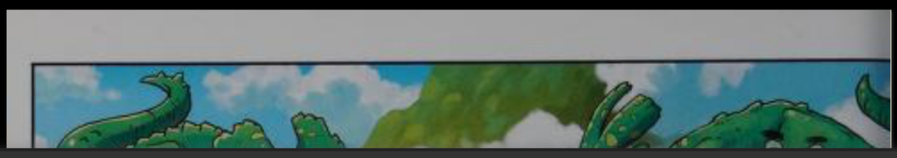

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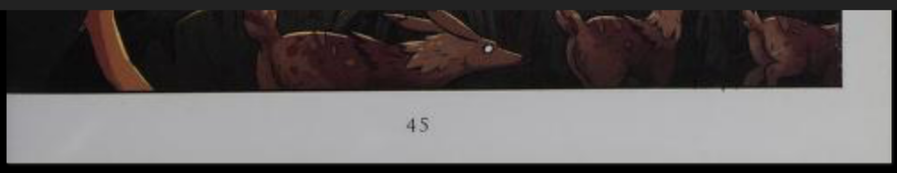

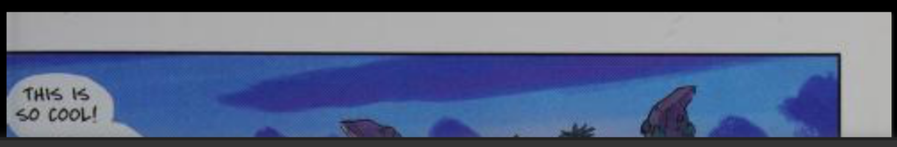

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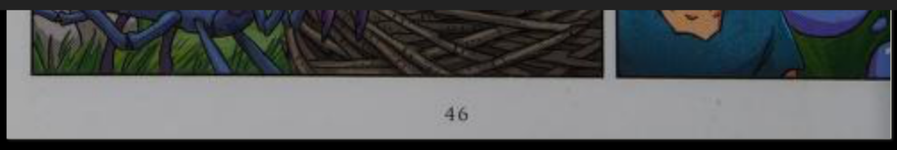

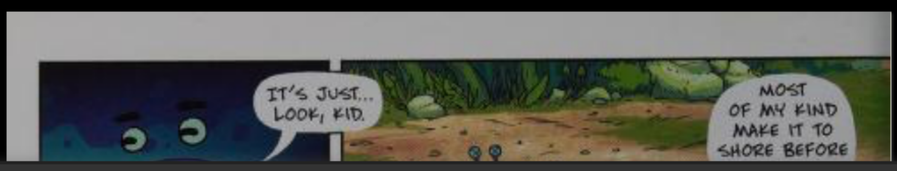

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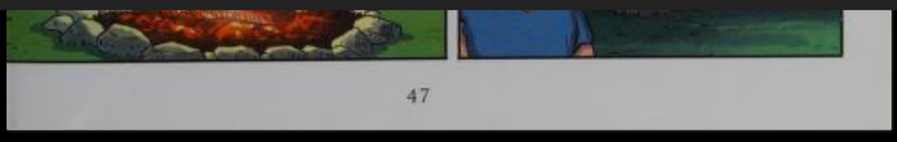

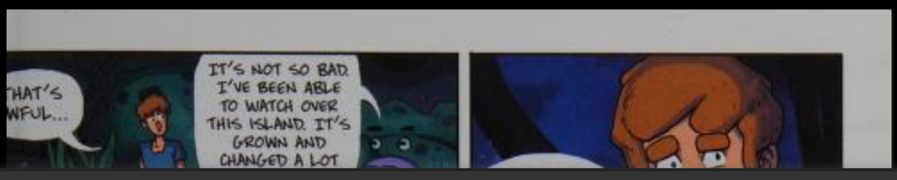

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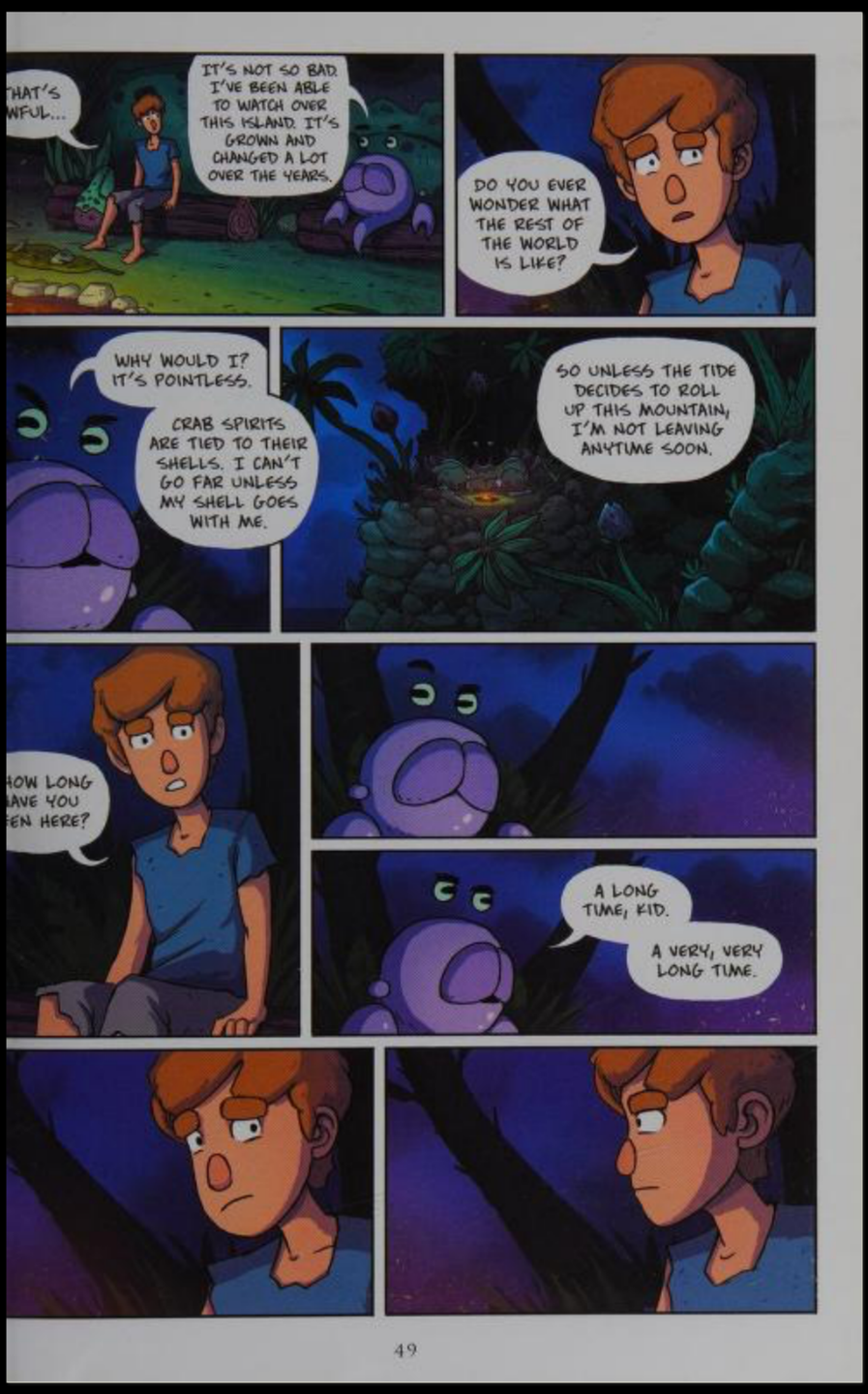

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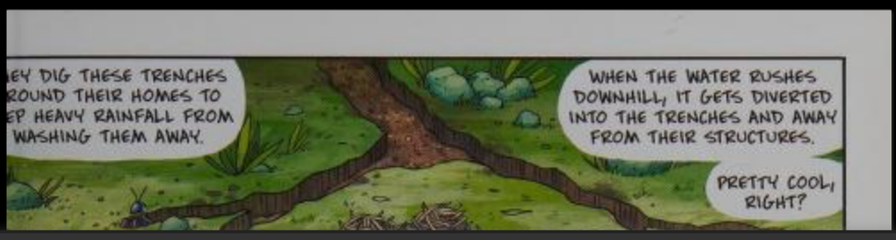

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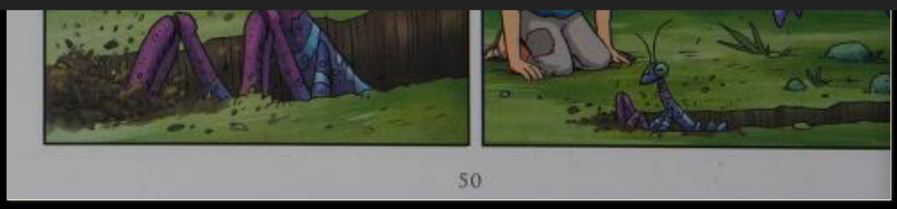

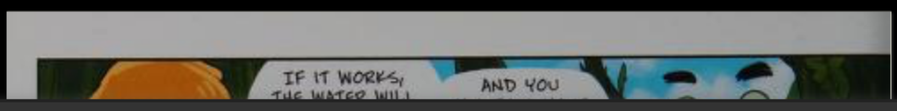

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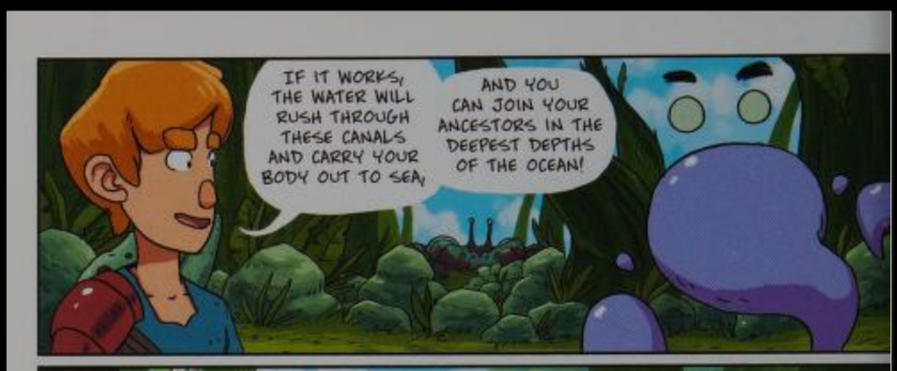

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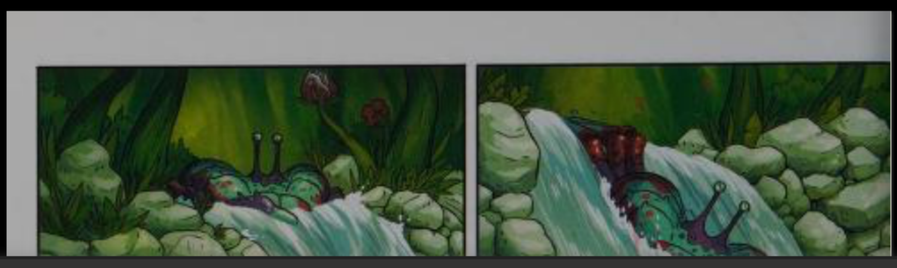

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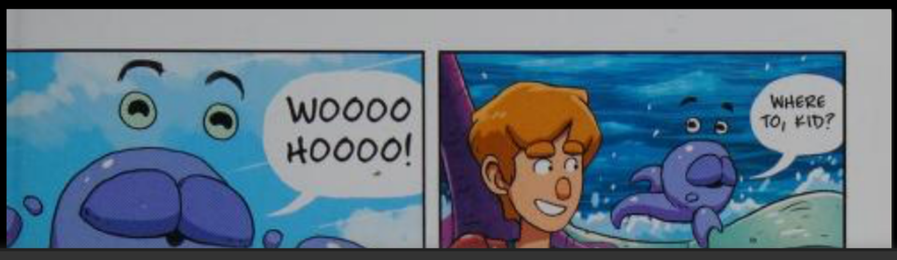

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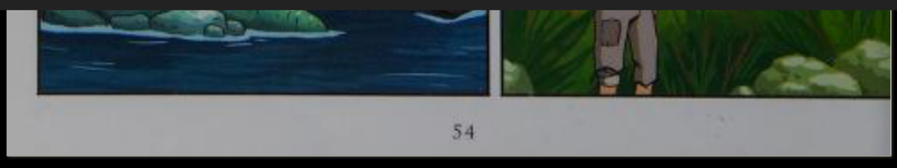

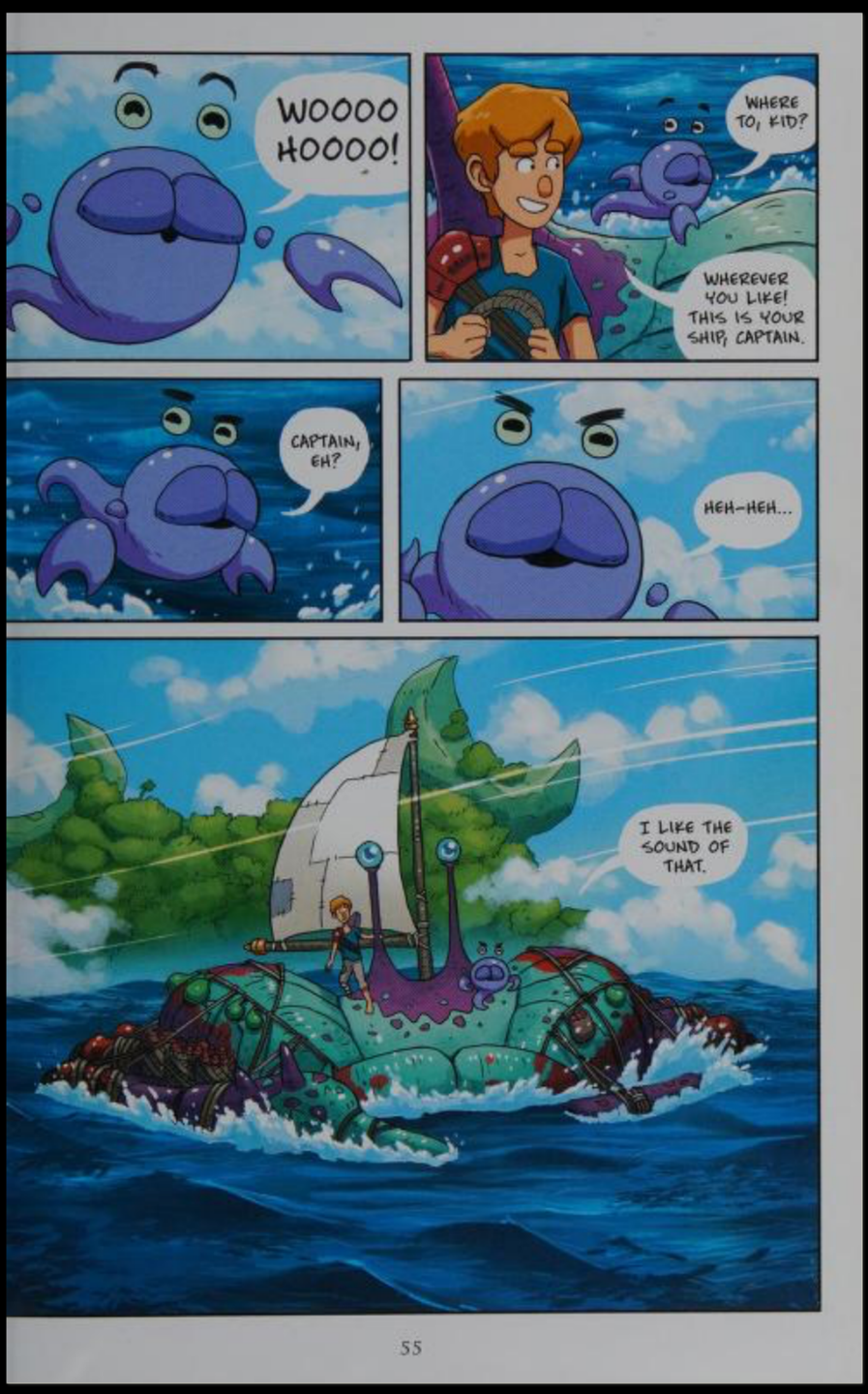

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& RAINA TELGEMEIER
COLORS BY BRADEN LAMB

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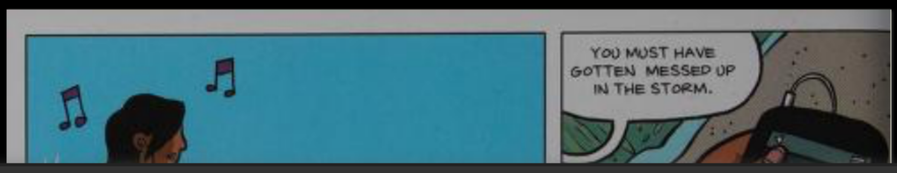

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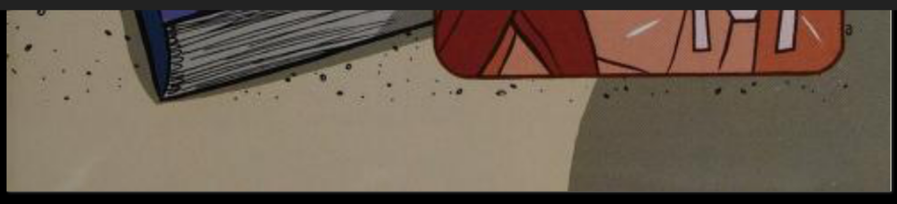

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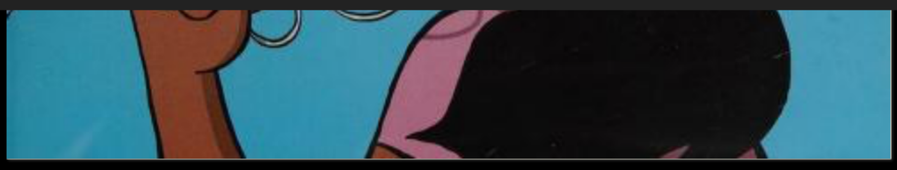

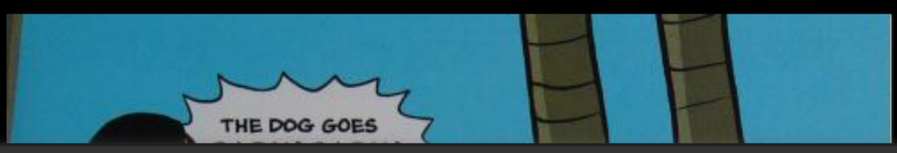

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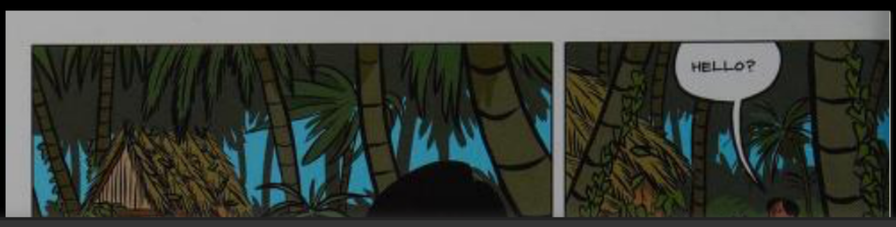

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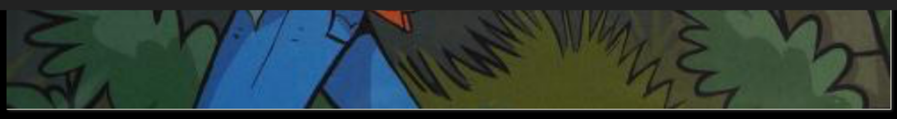

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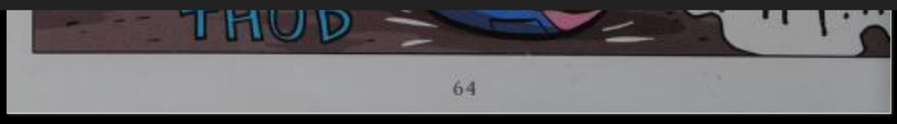

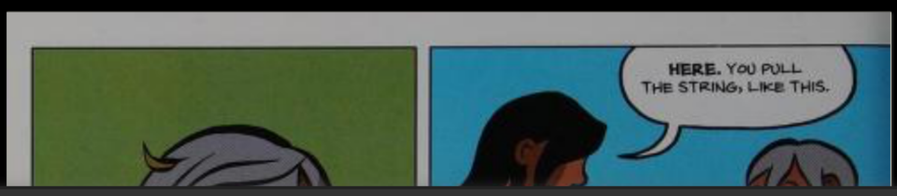

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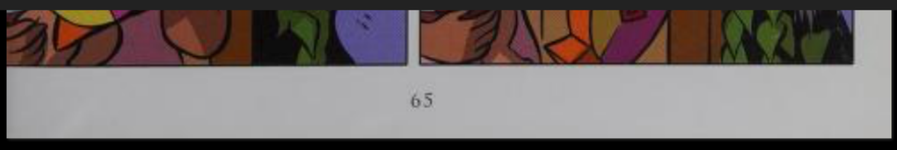

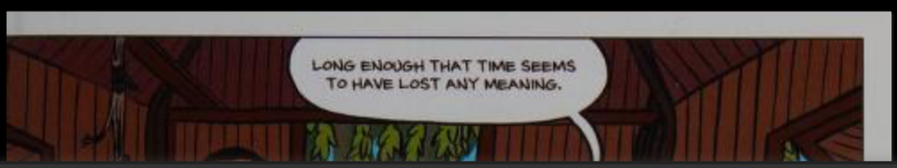

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I WASN'T EXPECTING COMPANY...

...BUT YOU MIGHT AS WELL MAKE YOURSELF AT HOME.

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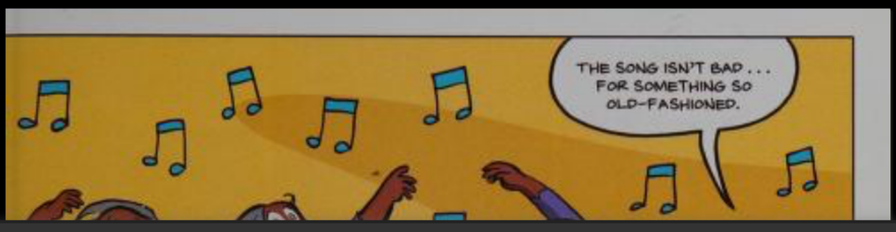

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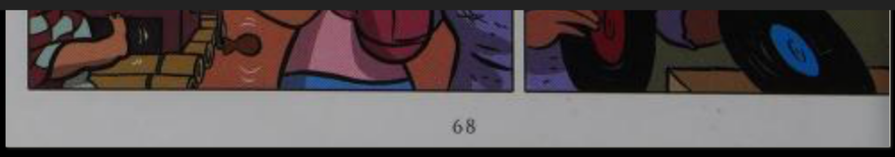

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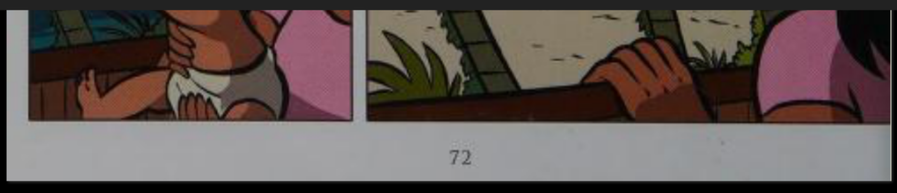

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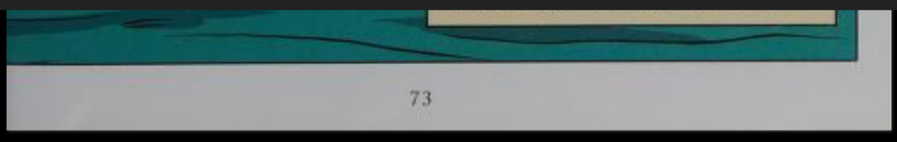

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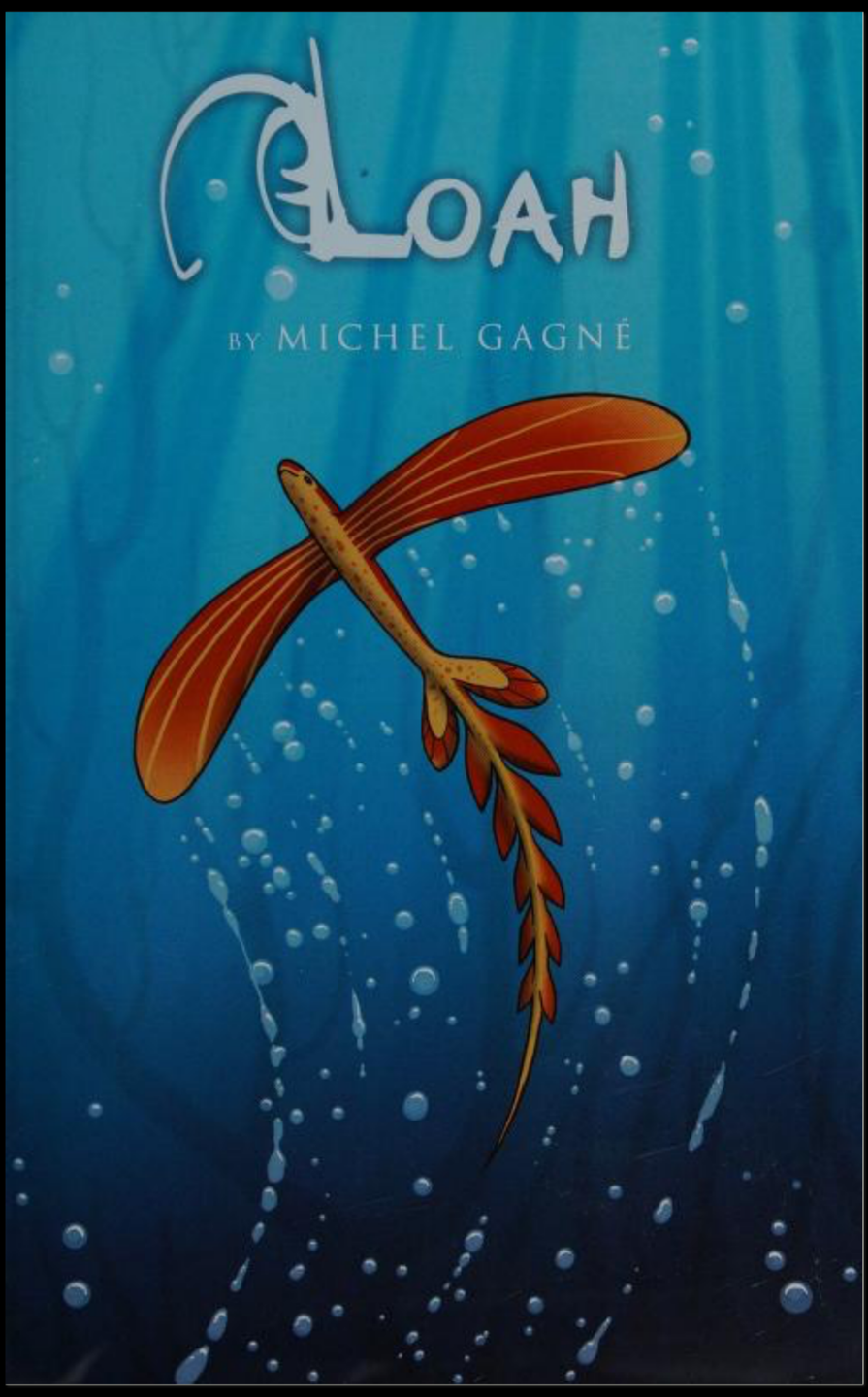

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Long ago, in a pond teeming with early forms of life...

Loah was born.

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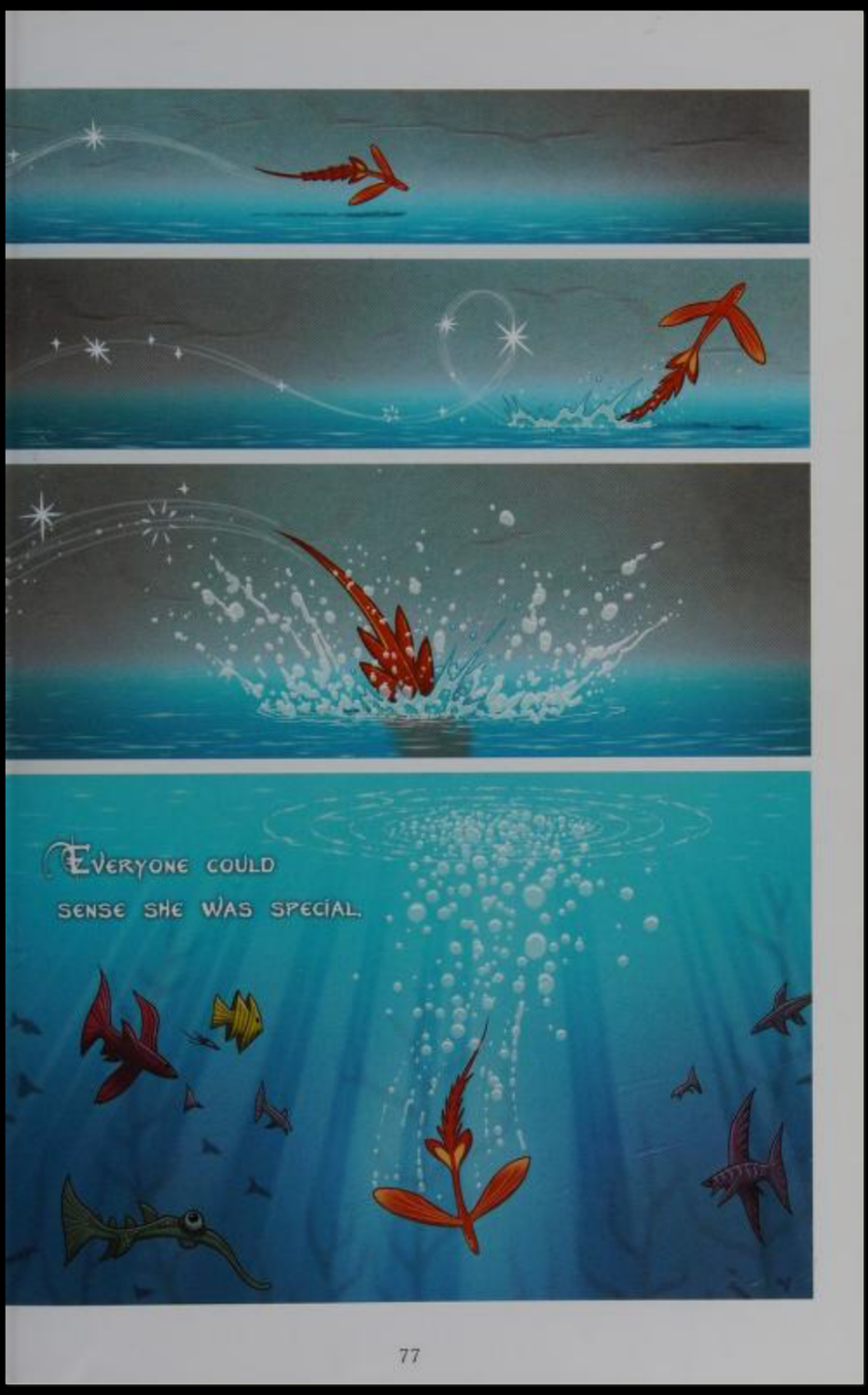

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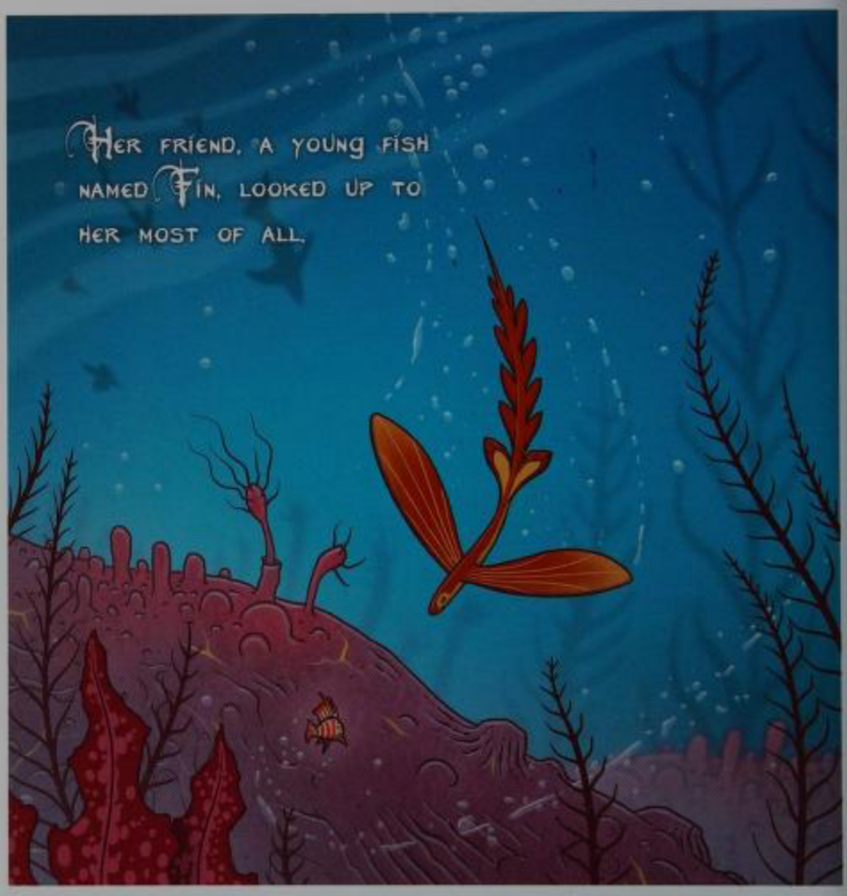

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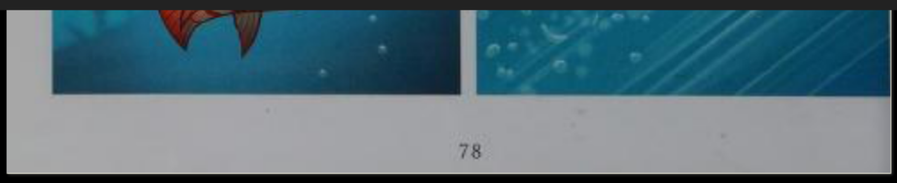

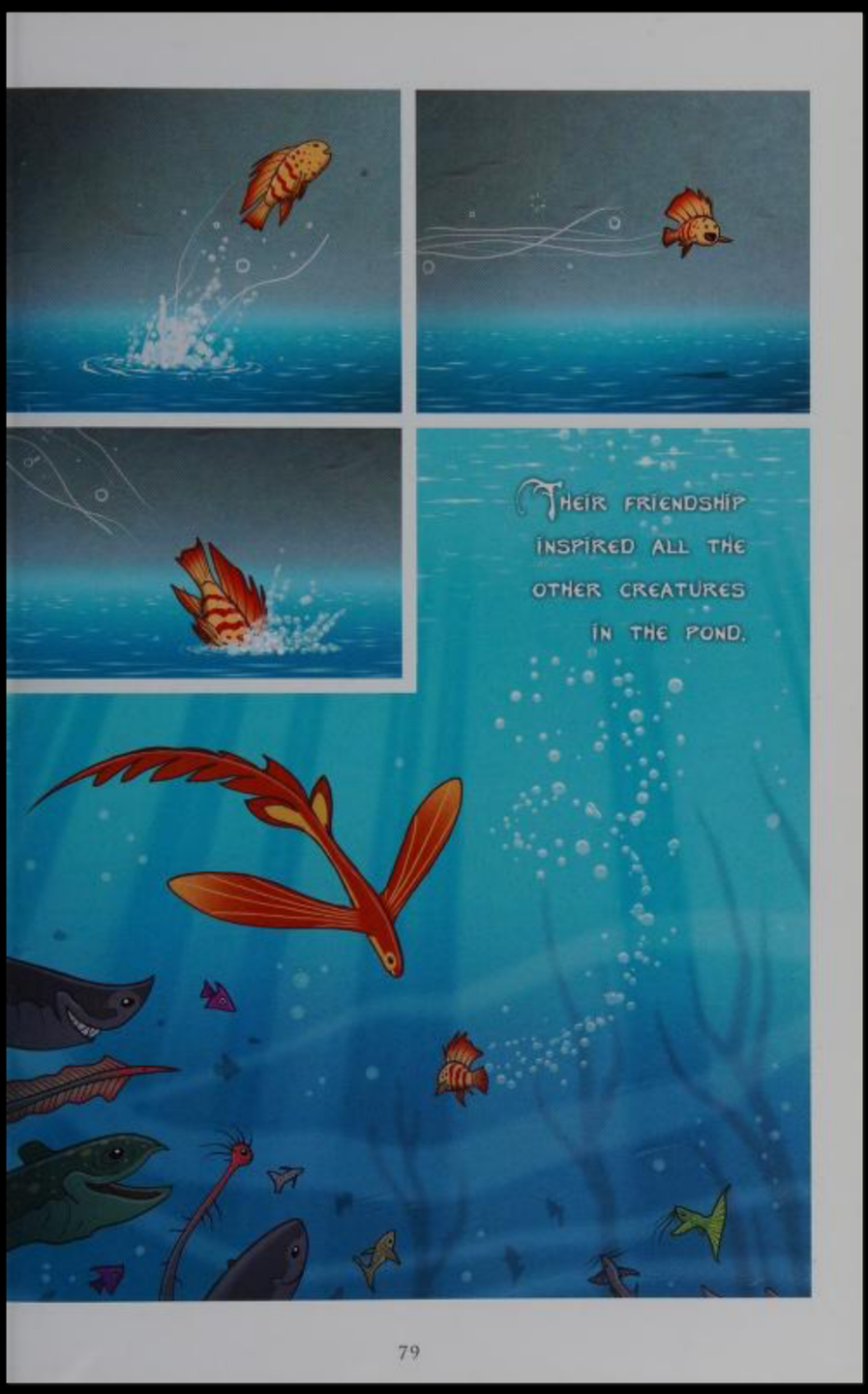

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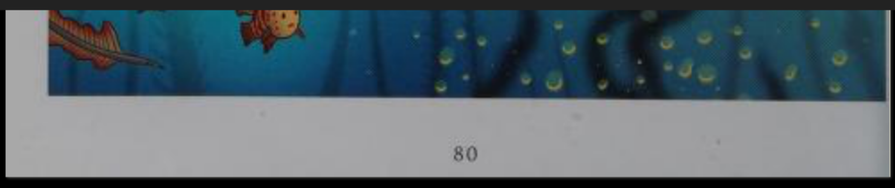

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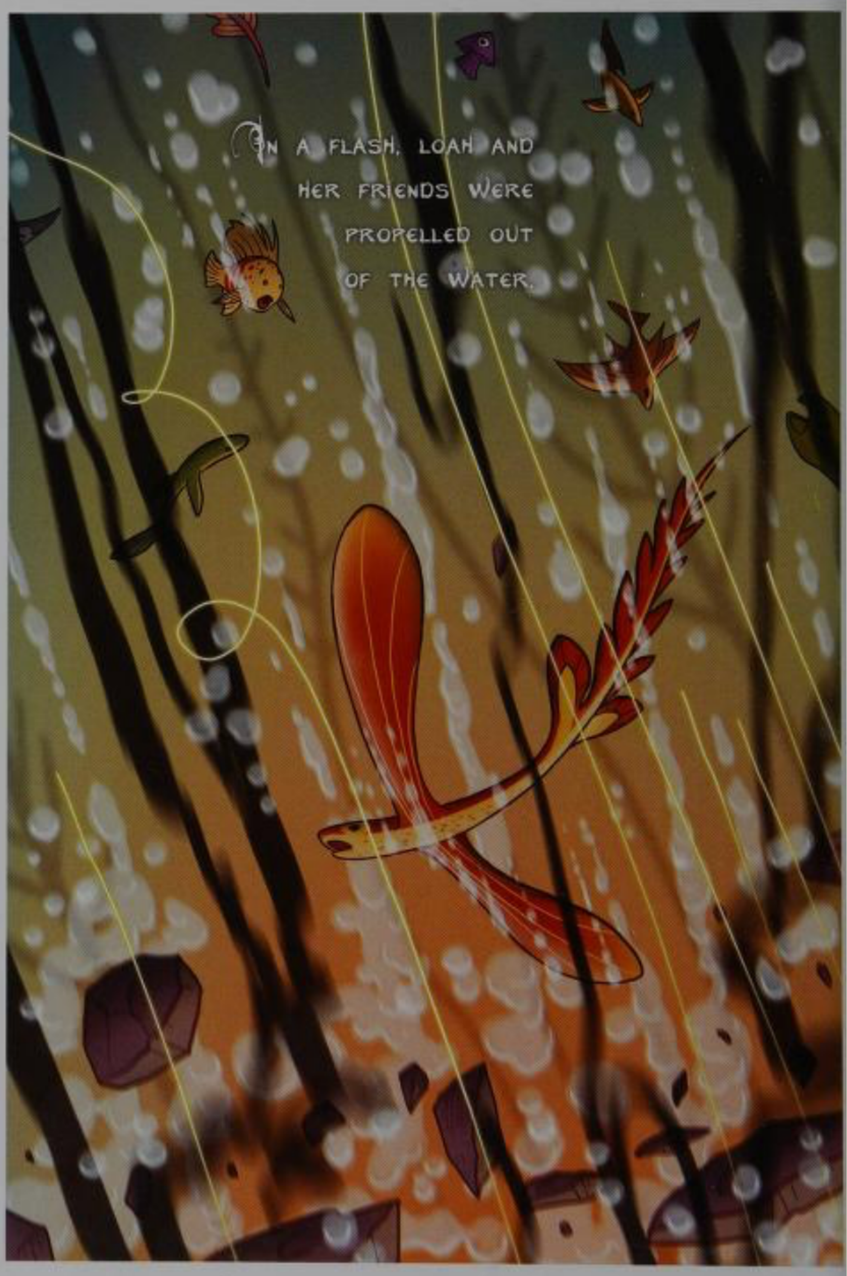

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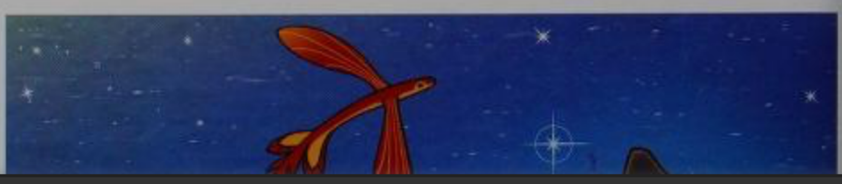

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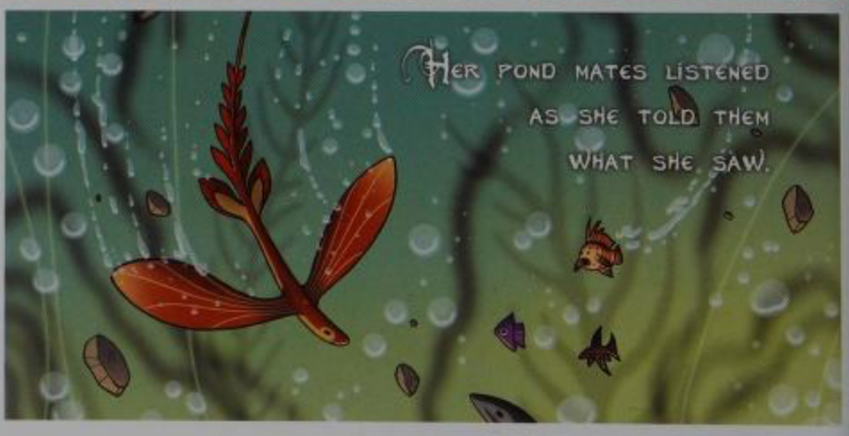

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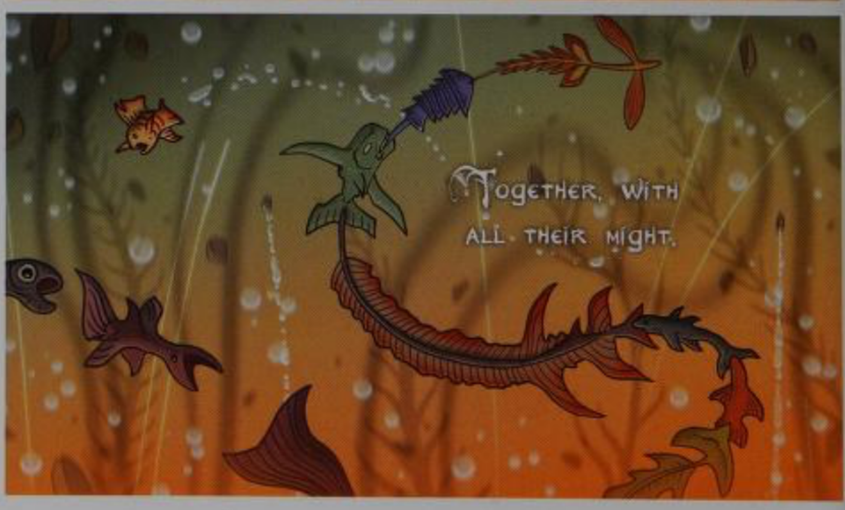

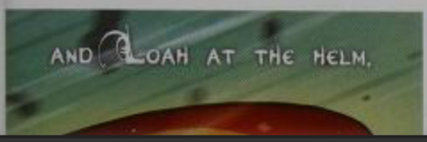

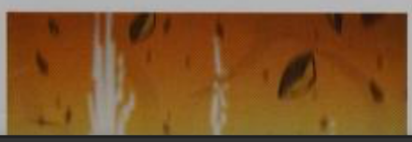

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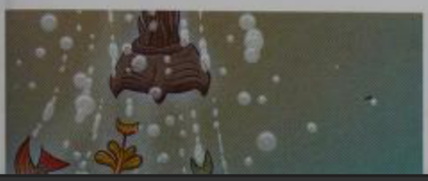

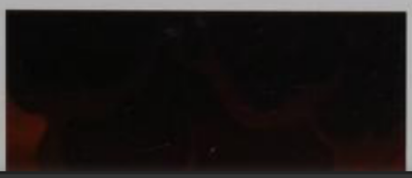

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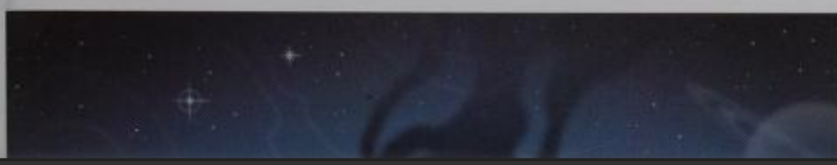

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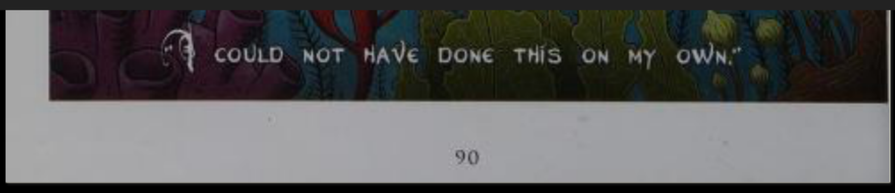

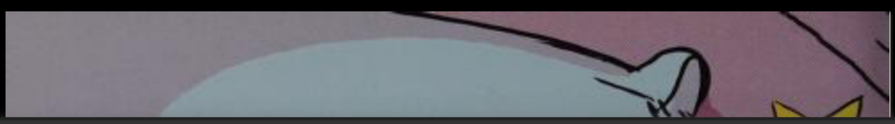

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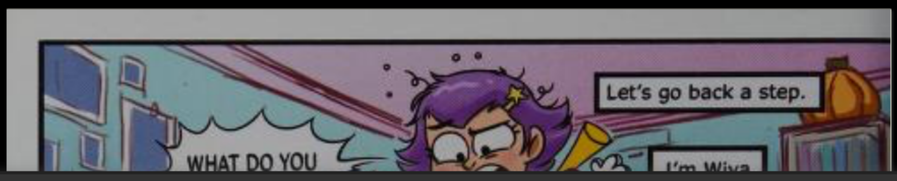

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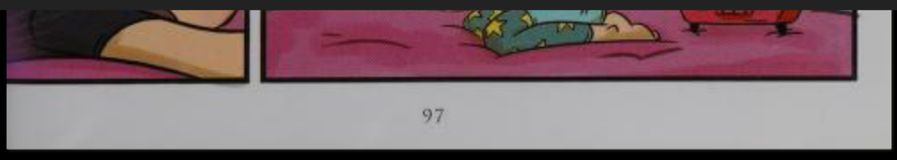

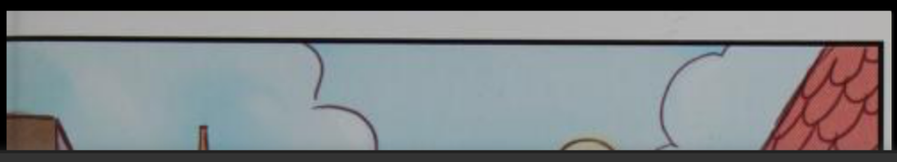

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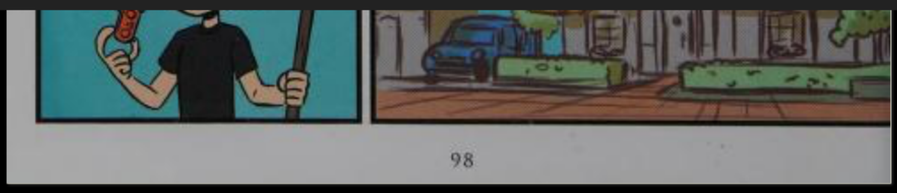

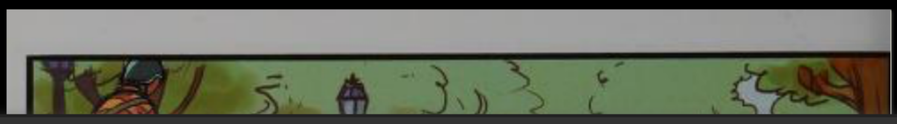

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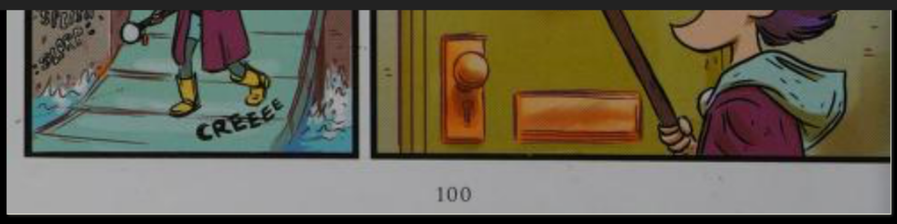

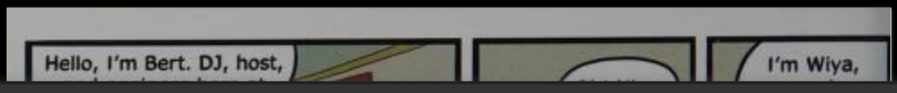

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It began a couple of years ago, when I moved to the big city and started my own little radio station.

I interviewed interesting, talented, or just plain unusual characters from around town.

But after a while, I felt like I'd heard it all...

Like I'd run out of folks to talk to.

There was a big world out there, and I was missing out on it.

I was at a crossroads, all right. Keep working at the station, or leave to see the world?

What'd you do?

The only thing a rational person could do.

I grabbed a shovel, detached the station from the mainland...

...and set sail.

And boy am I glad I did! I can't even begin to tell you the places I've seen and the people I've met.

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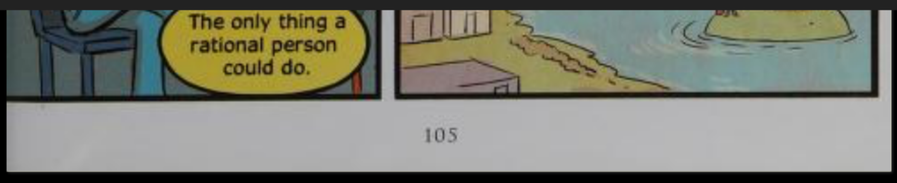

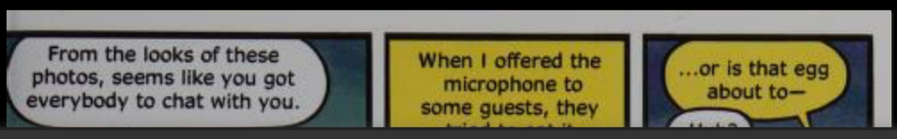

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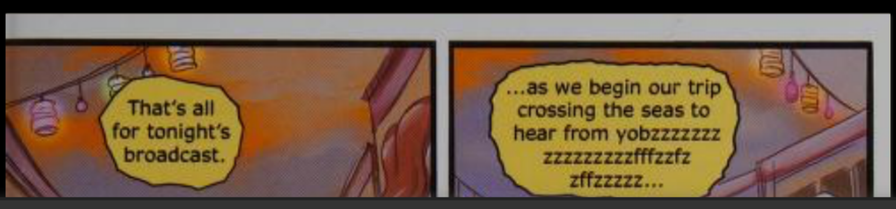

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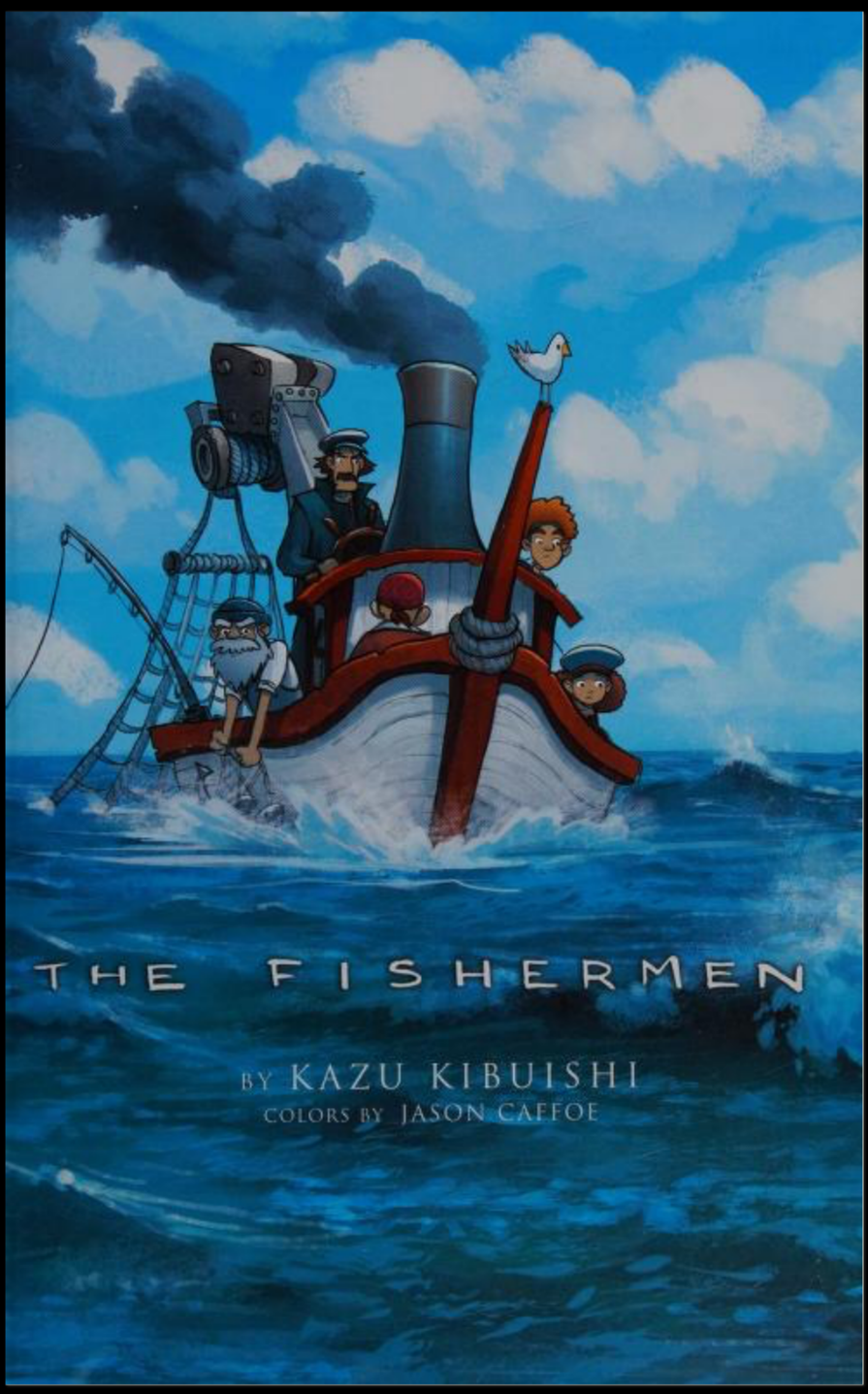

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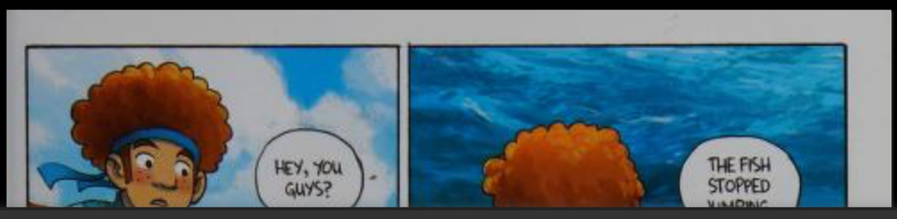

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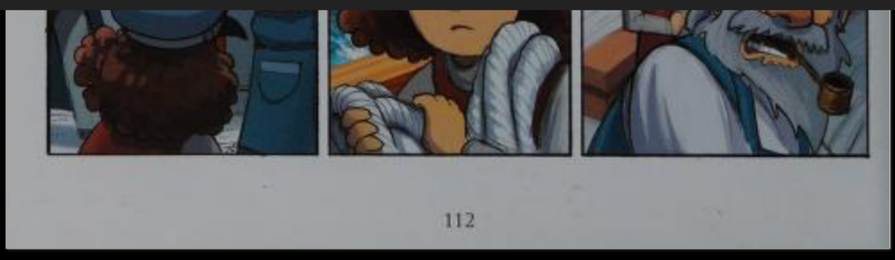

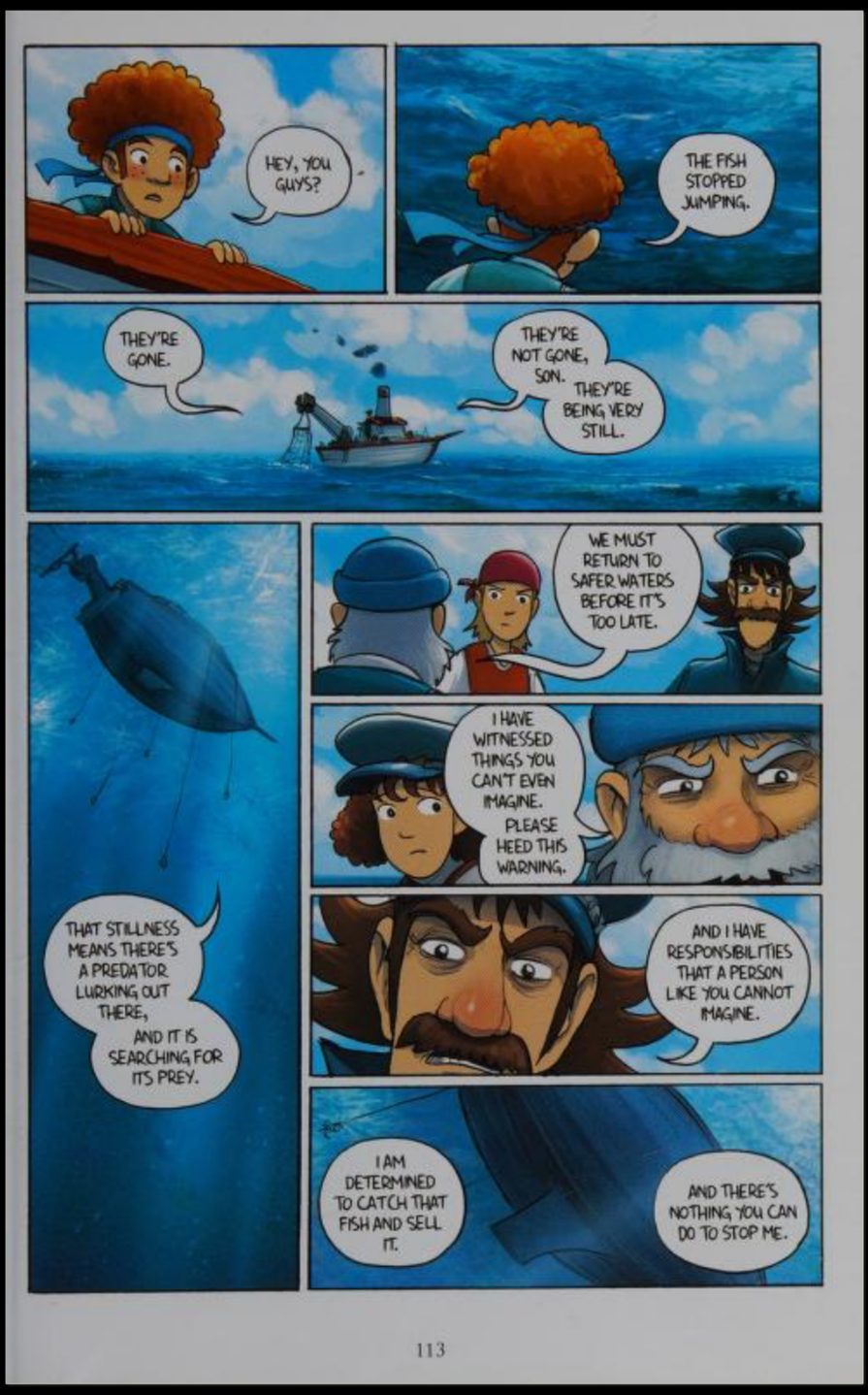

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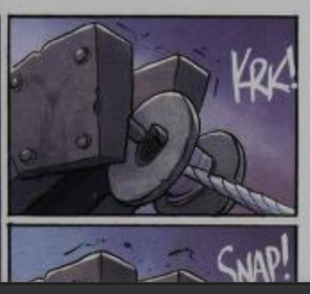

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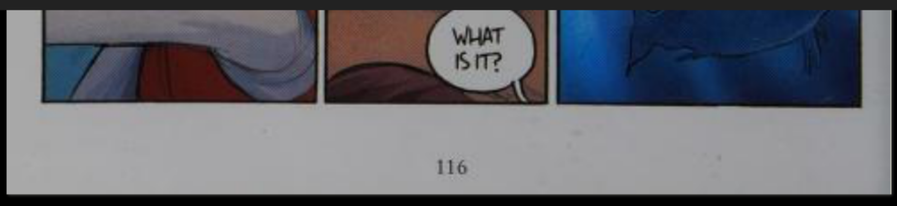

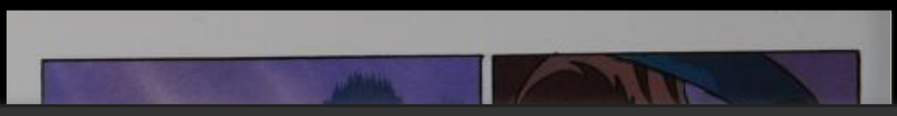

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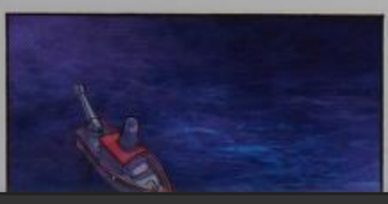
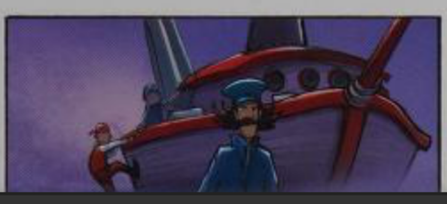

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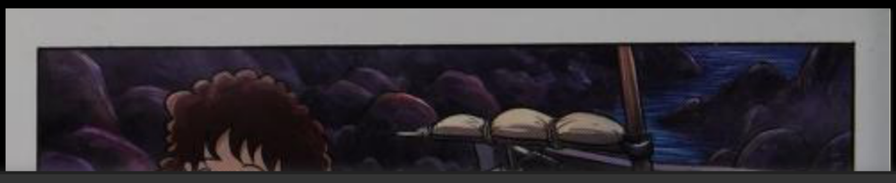

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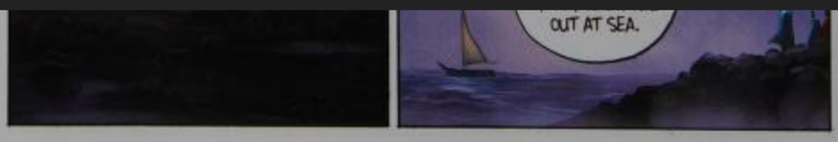

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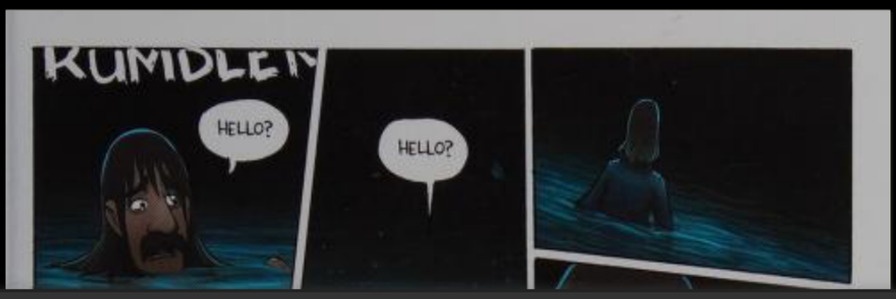

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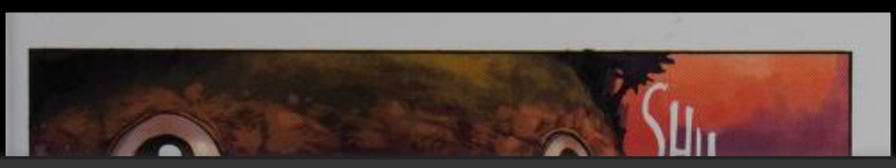

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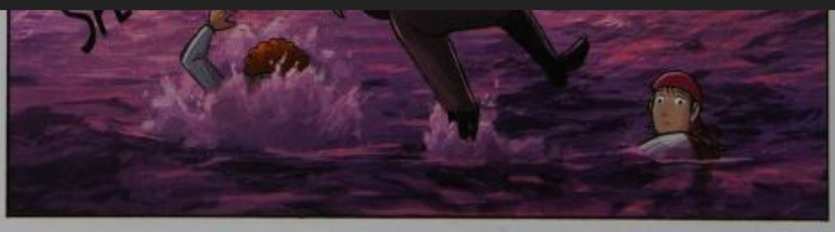

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JASON CAFFOE is a contributor to *Explorer: The Mystery Boxes* and the *Flight* anthologies and is the

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ABOUT THE CREATORS

JASON CAFFOE is a contributor to *Explorer: The Mystery Boxes* and the *Flight* anthologies and is the lead production assistant for the *Amulet* series. Visit him at jasoncaffoe.com.

MICHEL GAGNÉ works in film animation and is the BAFTA/Annie Award–winning creator of the graphic novels *The Saga of Rex* and *ZED: A Comic Tale*, as well as the award-winning video game Insanely Twisted Shadow Planet. Learn more at gagneint.com.

CHRYSTIN GARLAND graduated from the Savannah College of Art and Design and now works as a storyboard artist and animator. You can see her work at ladygarland.com.

KAZU KIBUISHI is the creator of the *New York Times*–bestselling graphic novel series *Amulet*. He was also the editor and art director of eight volumes of *Flight*, the groundbreaking Eisner-nominated graphic anthology. His comics collection *Copper* was a Junior Library Guild selection; an earlier work, *Daisy Kutter*, was named a YALSA Best Book for Young Adults. Kibuishi recently created cover art for the new paperback editions of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. For more on Kazu, check out boltcity.com.

JAKE PARKER illustrated Michael Chabon's picture book *The Astonishing Secret of Awesome Man* and is the creator of the *Missile Mouse* graphic novel series. Visit him at mrjakeparker.com.

DAVE ROMAN is the creator of the *Astronaut Academy* and *Teen Boat!* graphic novels, both of which were Junior Library Guild selections. He has contributed stories to *Explorer: The Mystery Boxes* and *Nursery Rhyme Comics* and is the coauthor of two *New York Times* bestsellers, *The Last Airbender: Zuko's Story* and *X-Men: Misfits*. See more of Dave's work at yaytime.com.

KATIE SHANAHAN is a storyboard artist for animated children's TV shows. She and her brother Steven have contributed to *Flight* and created the popular comic *Silly Kingdom*, which was nominated for two Joe Shuster Awards. Check out more at ktshy.blogspot.ca.

STEVEN SHANAHAN is a writer, editor, and graphic animator who also collaborates on comics with his sister Katie. More about their digital comic can be found at sillykingdom-comic.blogspot.com.

RAINA TELGEMEIER is the Eisner Award–winning, *New York Times*–bestselling creator of *Smile* and *Drama*. Her graphic novels have been selected for the *New York Times* Editors' Choice and the *Boston Globe–Horn Book* Honor Award, and have been named a *Kirkus* Best Teen Book, a YALSA Great Graphic Novel for Teens, an ALA Top 10 Graphic Novel for Youth, and an ALA Notable Children's Book. See more of Raina's work at goraina.com.

* * *

SELENA DIZAZZO is a storyboard artist and graduate of Sheridan College who worked on the colors for "Radio Adrift."

ERIC KIM helped color "Radio Adrift." He is a comics artist whose work has been published by Oni Press.

BRADEN LAMB colored "Desert Island Playlist." He is an artist and animator whose credits include the *Adventure Time* comics series.

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by KAZU KIBUISHI
Can a determined doctor find a young patient

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AMULET BOOKS
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—K.K.

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2014948941

Paperback ISBN 978-1-4197-0884-8
Hardcover ISBN 978-1-4197-0882-4

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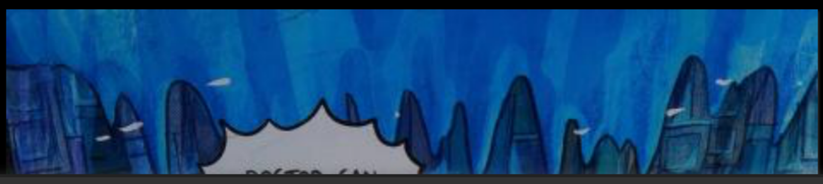

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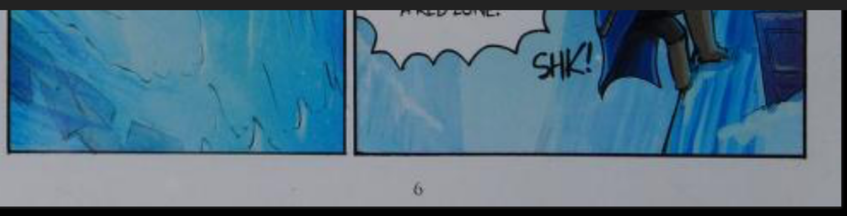

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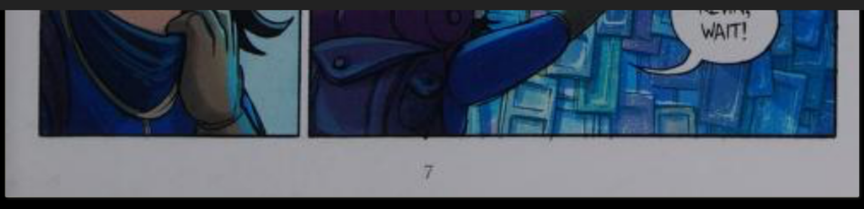

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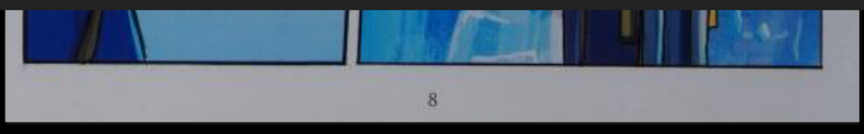

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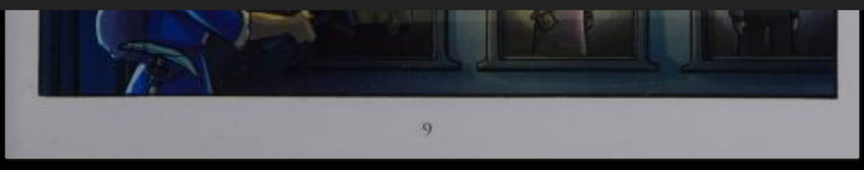

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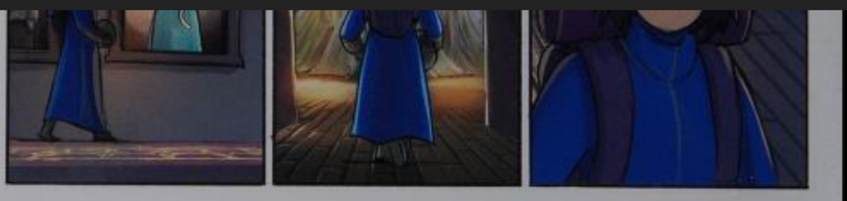

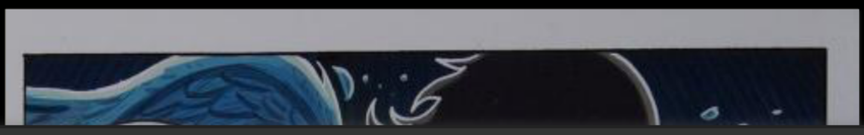

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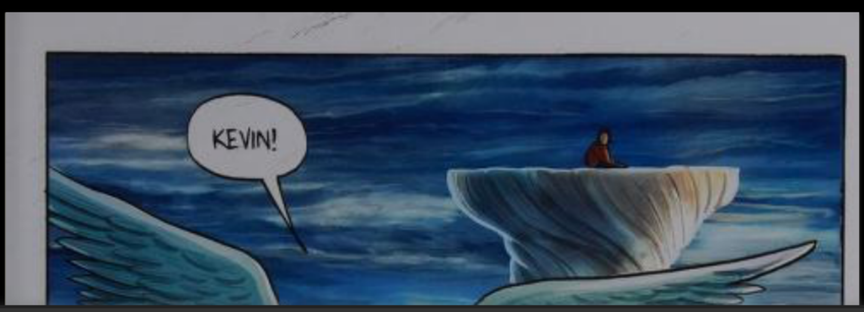

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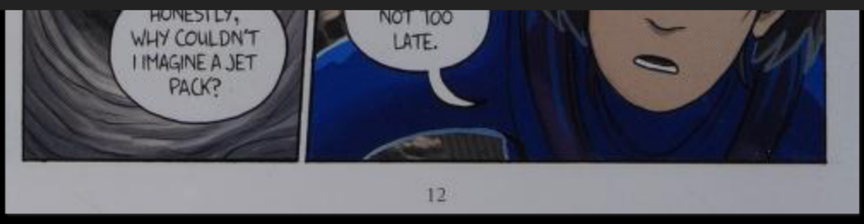

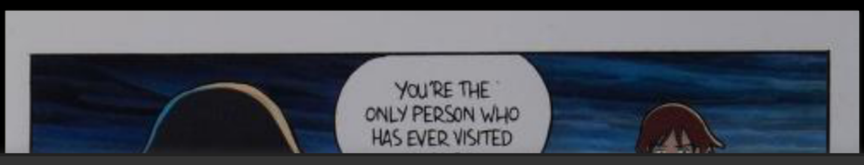

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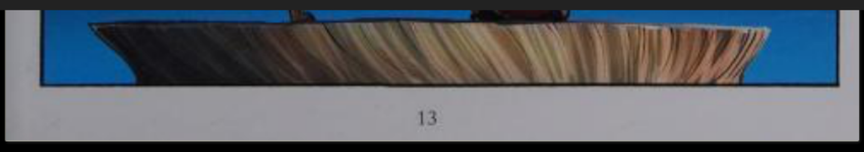

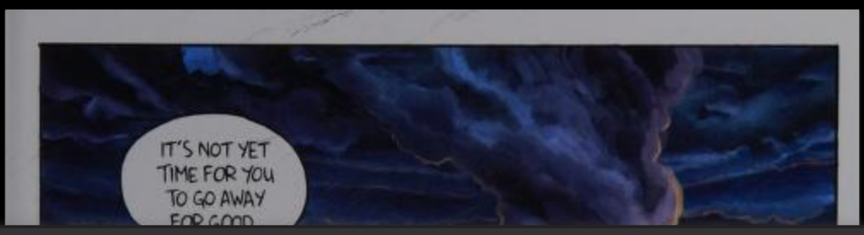

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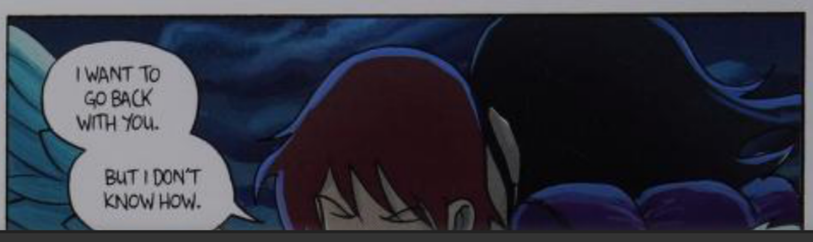

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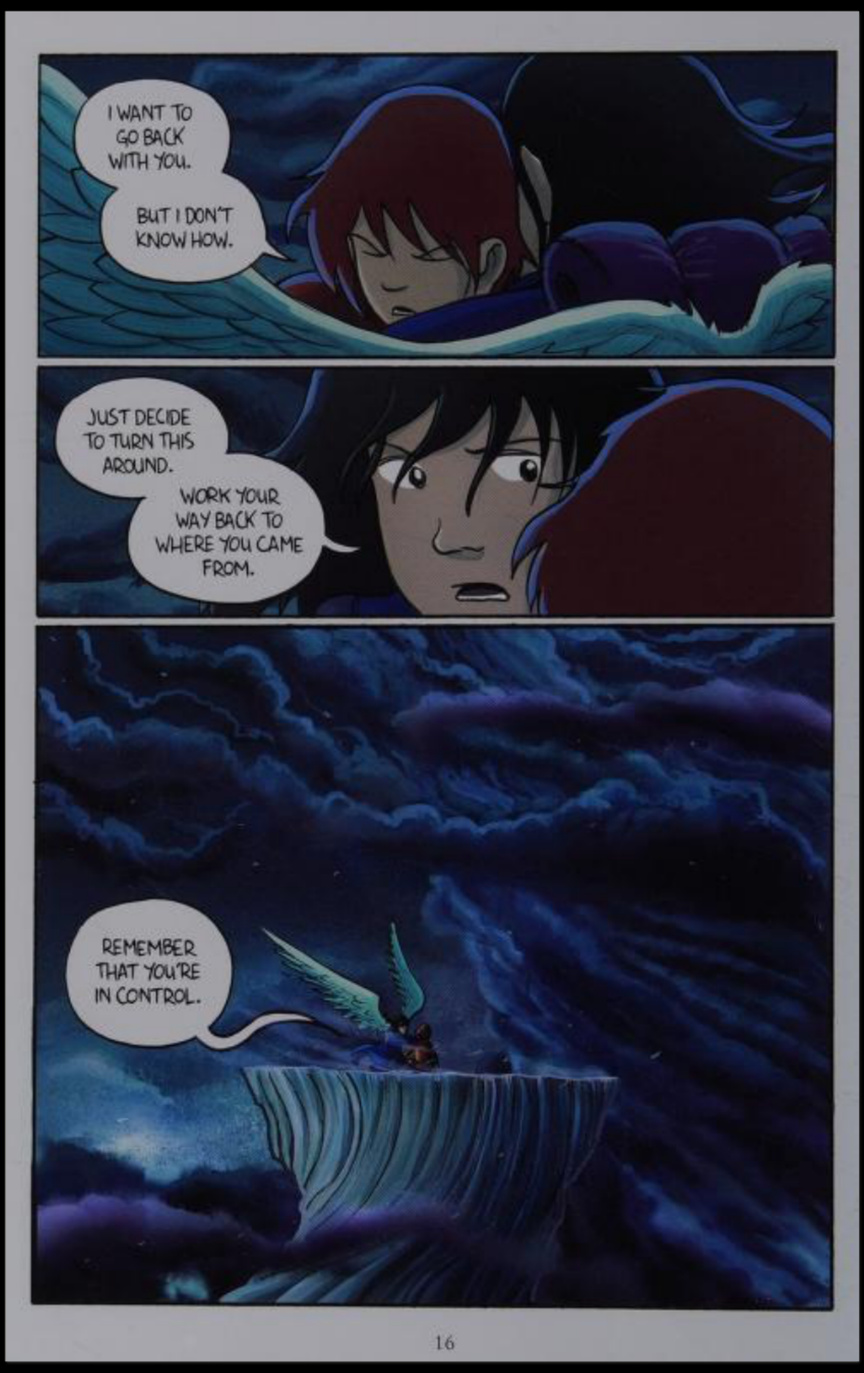

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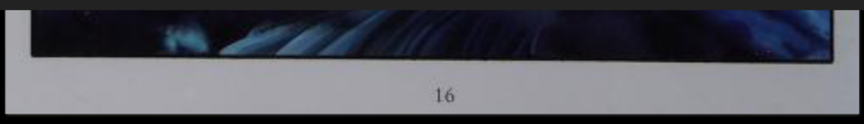

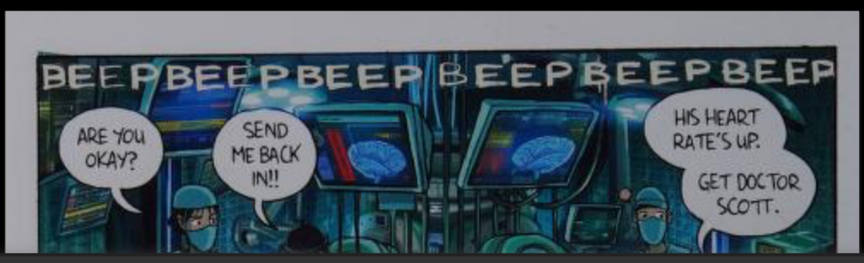

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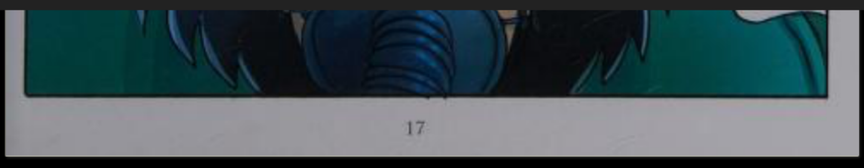

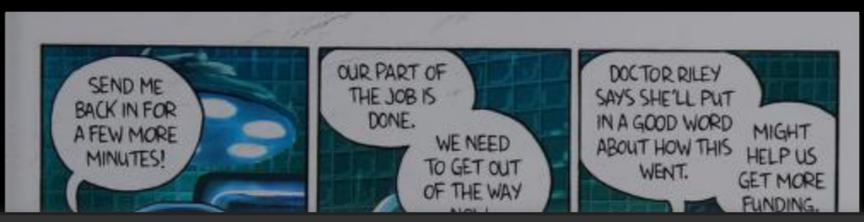

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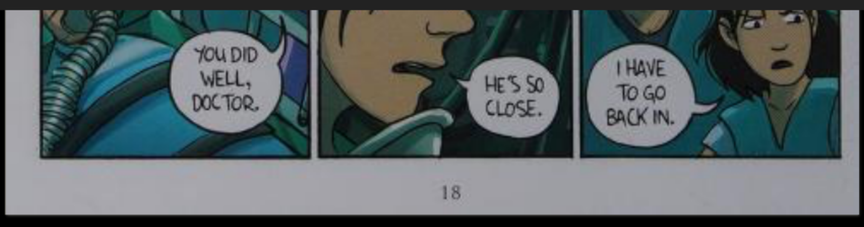

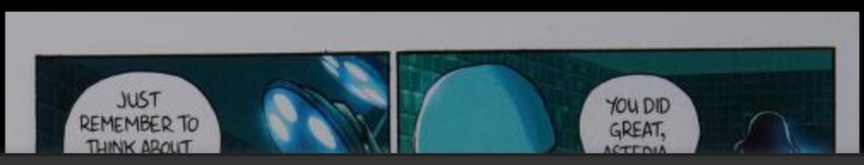

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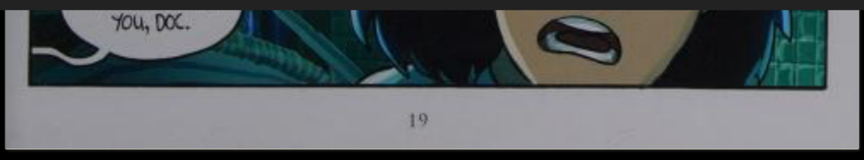

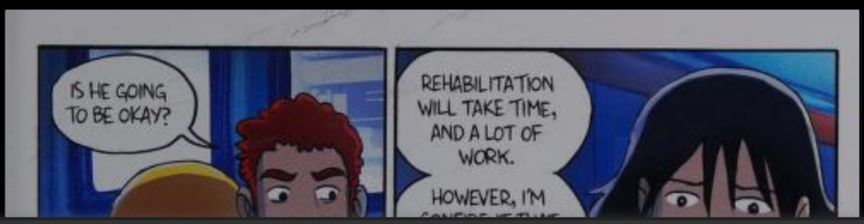

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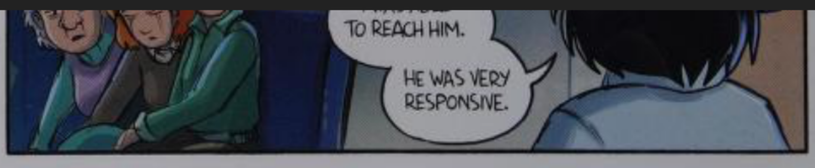

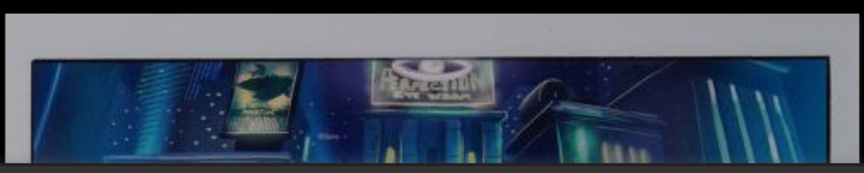

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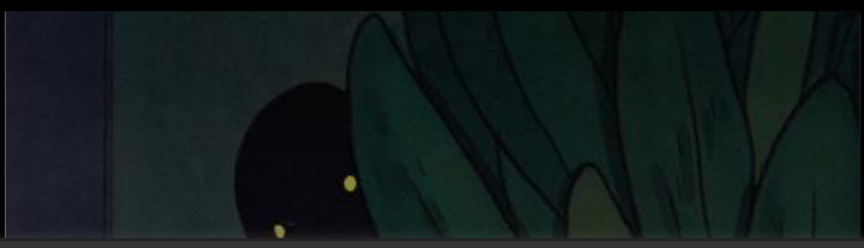

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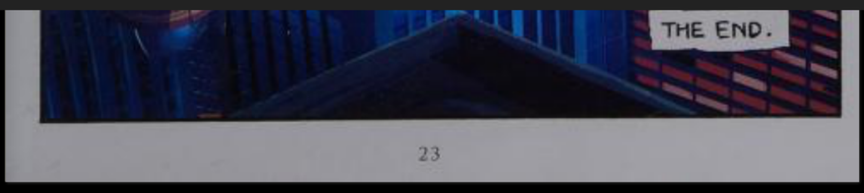

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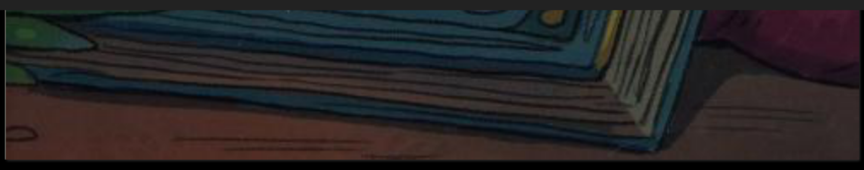

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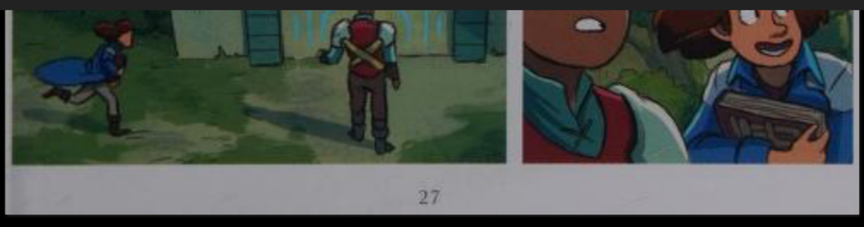

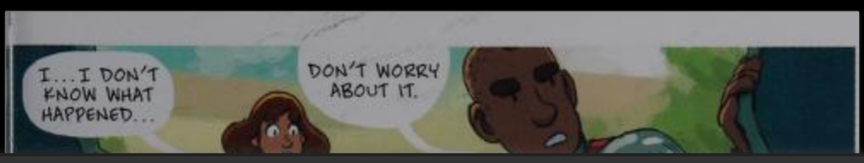

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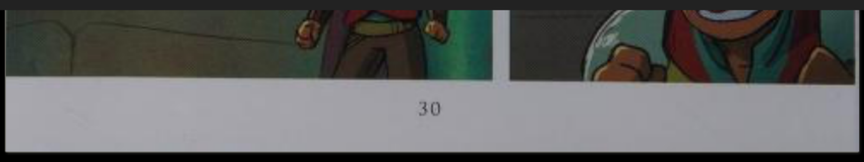

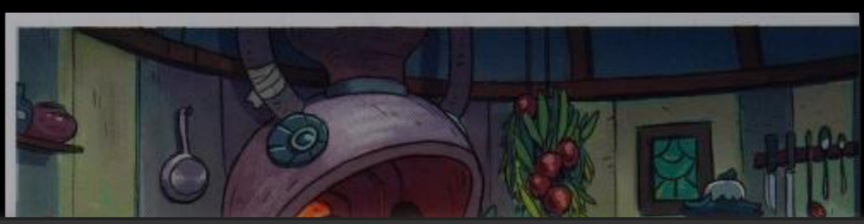

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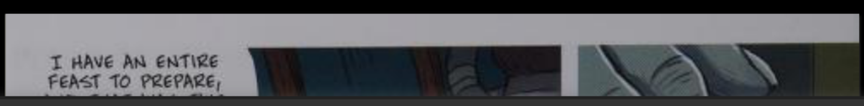

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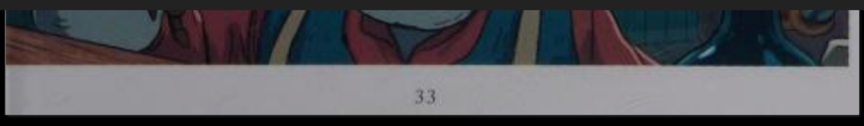

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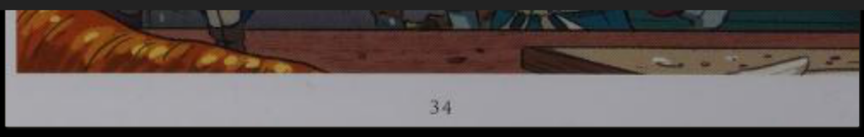

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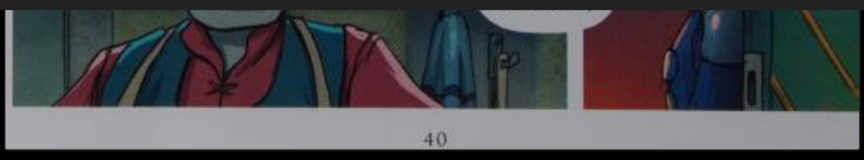

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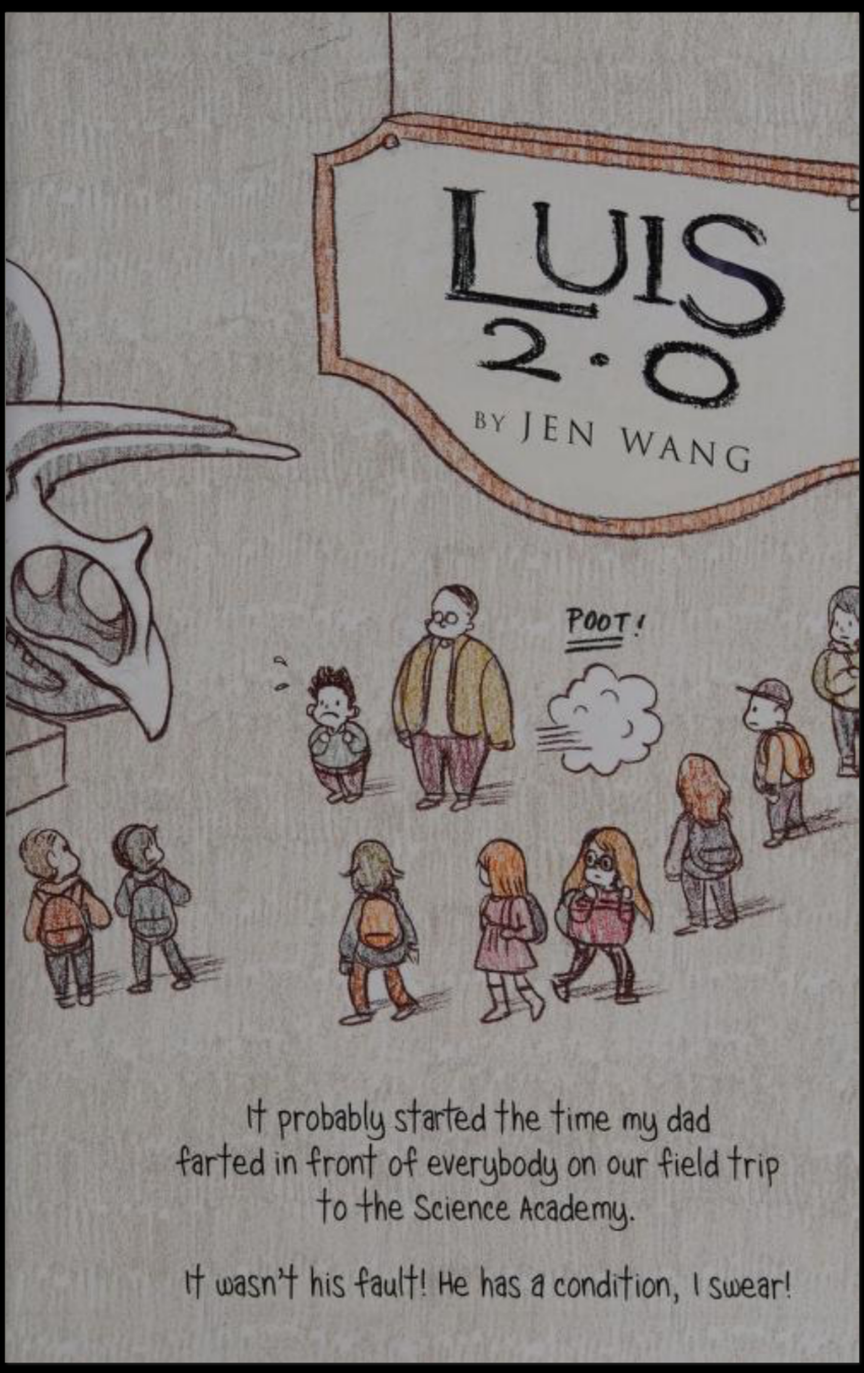

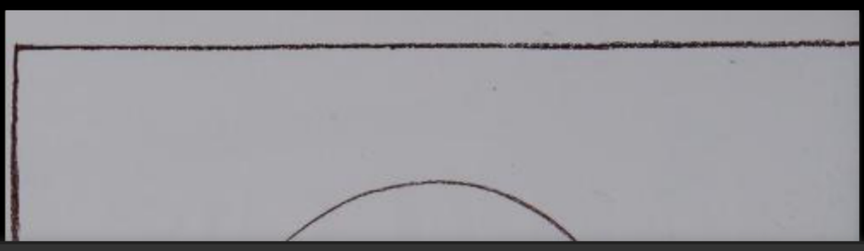

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It wasn't his fault! He has a condition, I swear!

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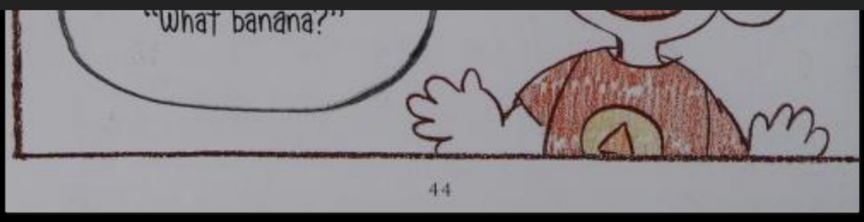

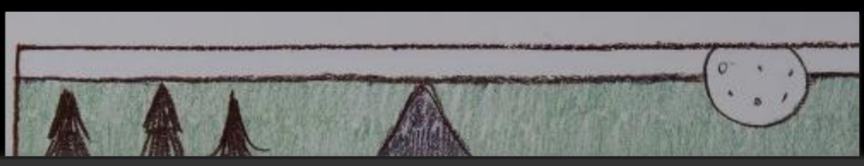

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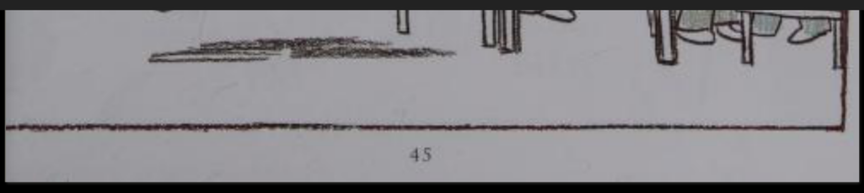

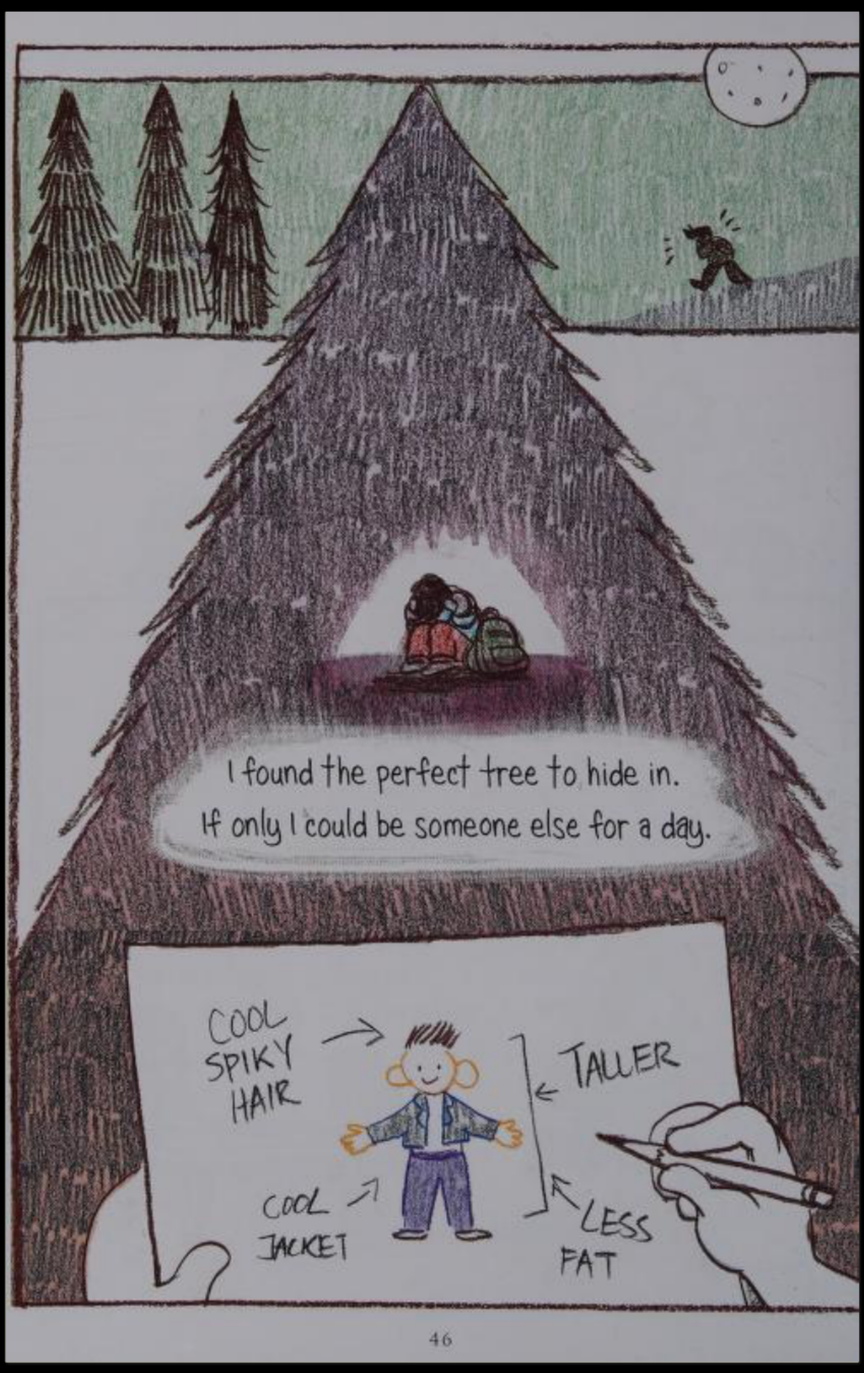

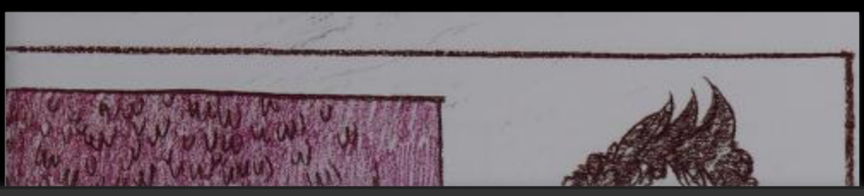

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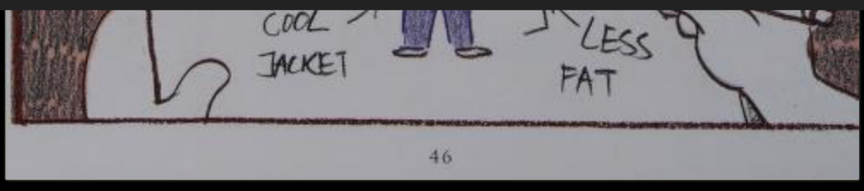

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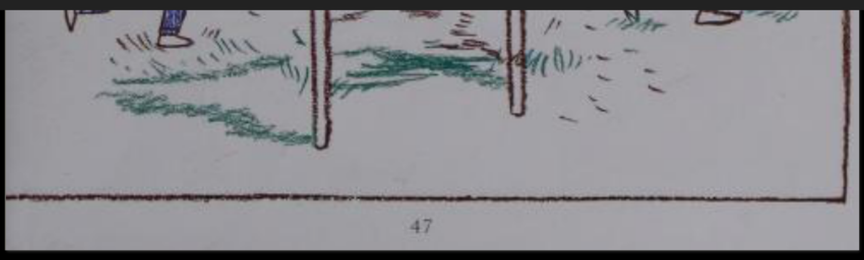

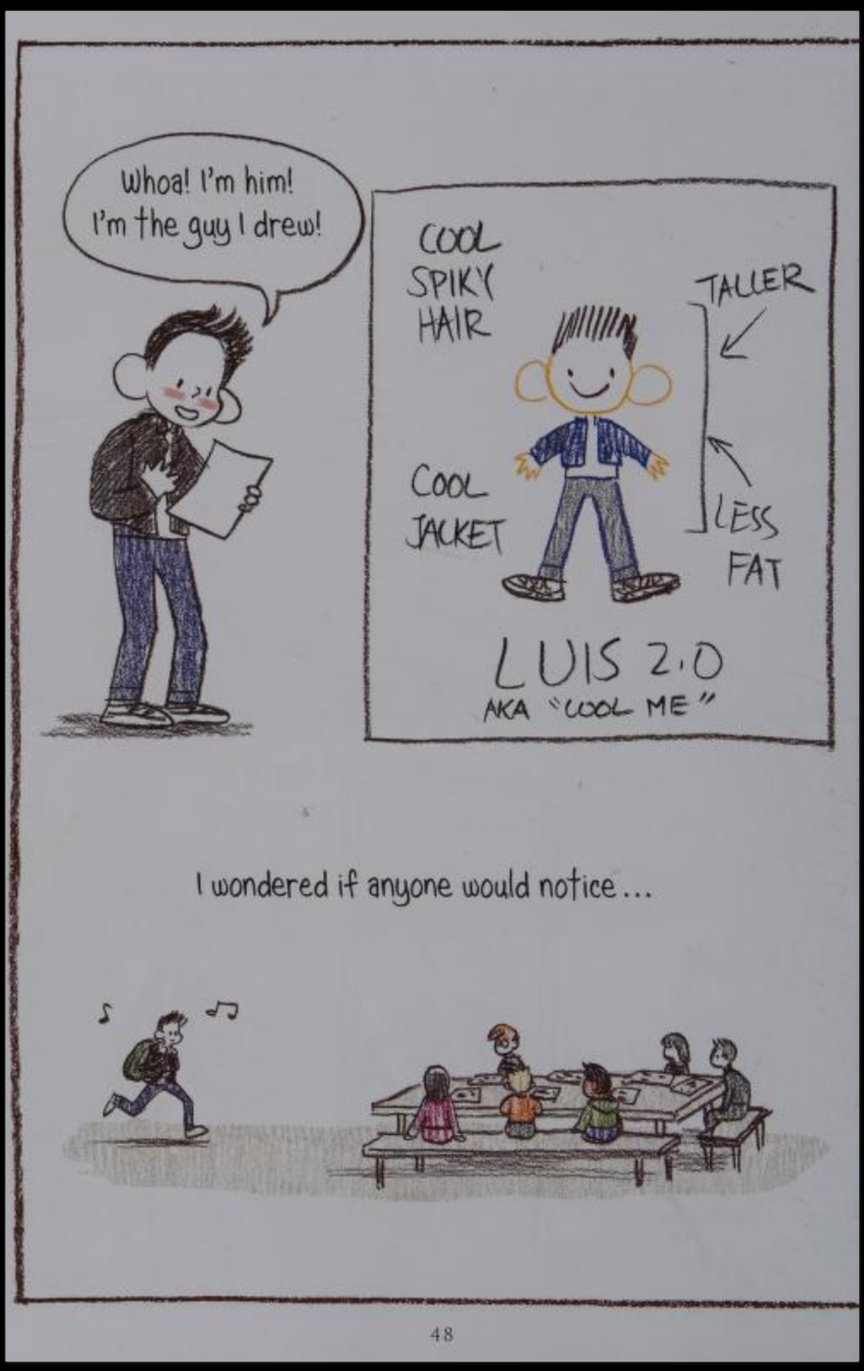

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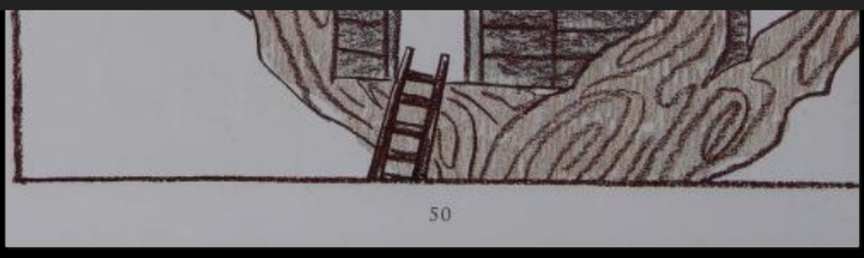

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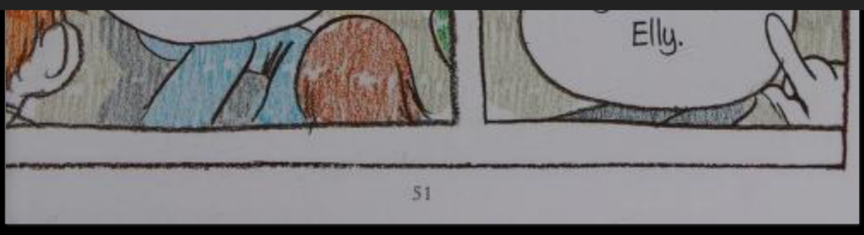

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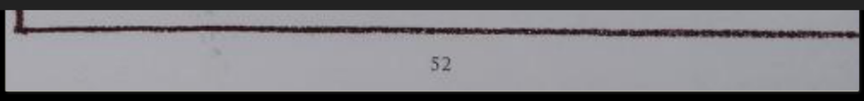

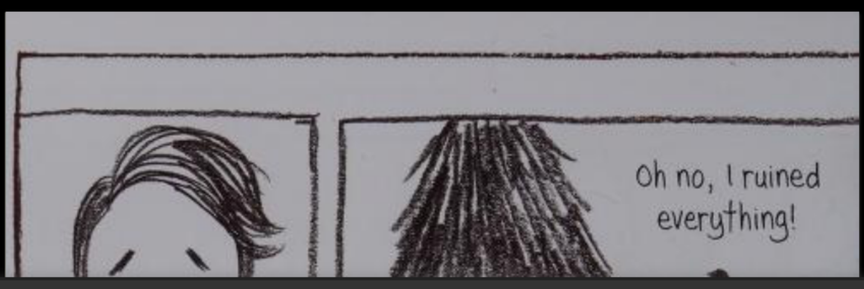

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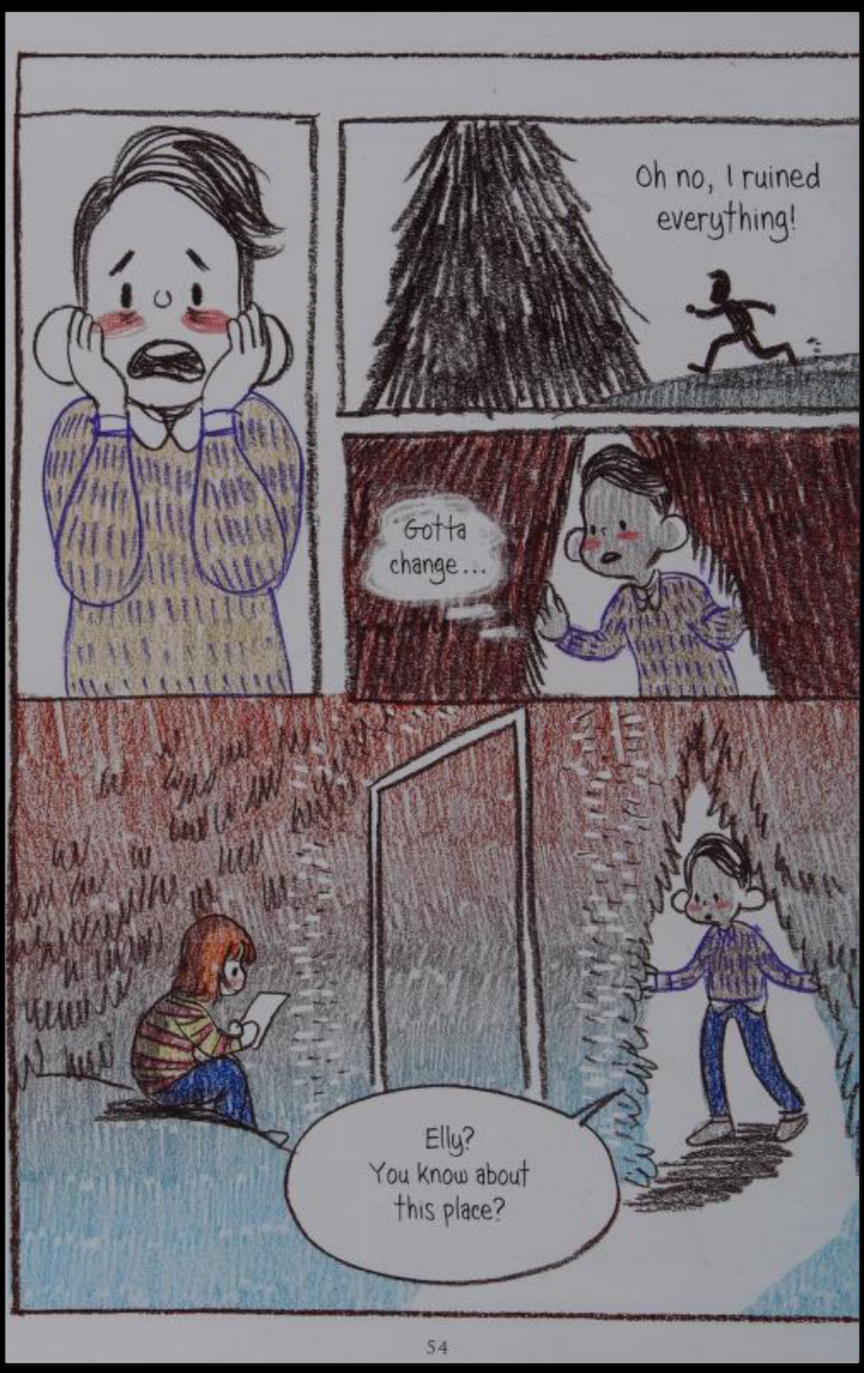

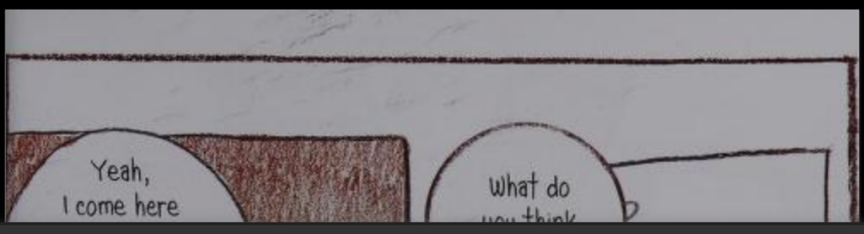

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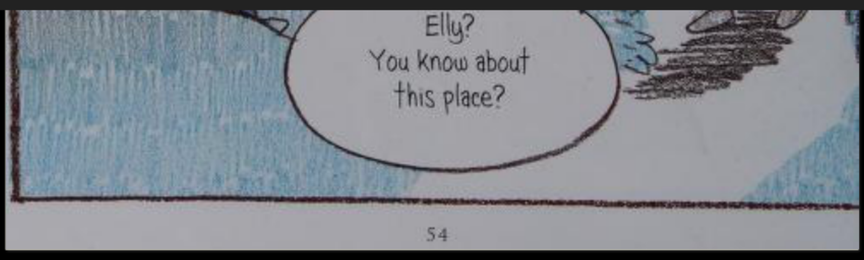

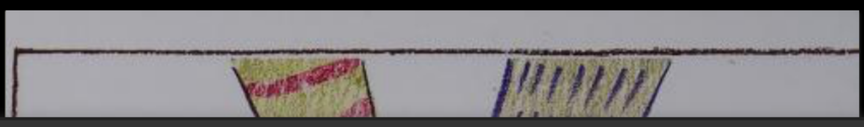

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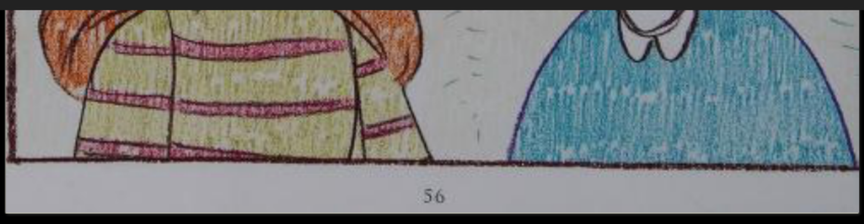

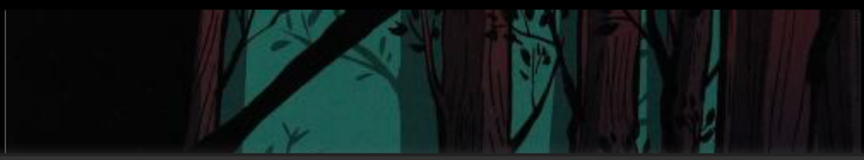

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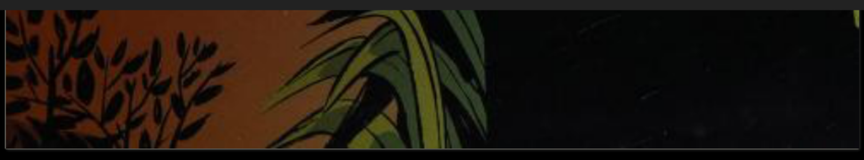

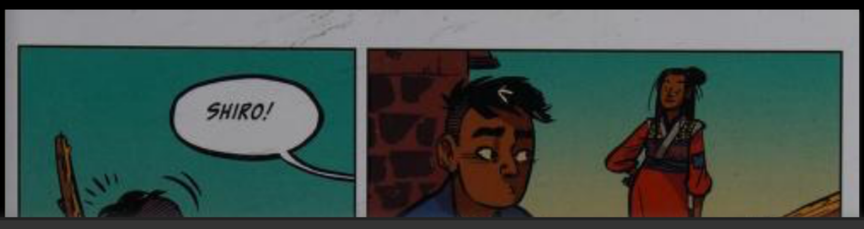

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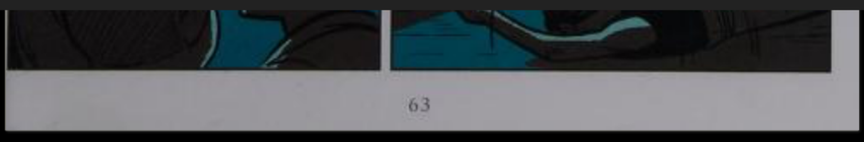

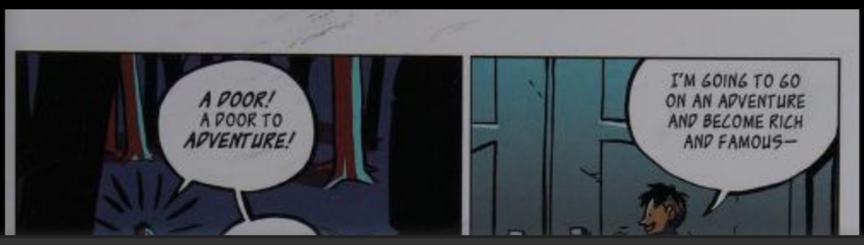

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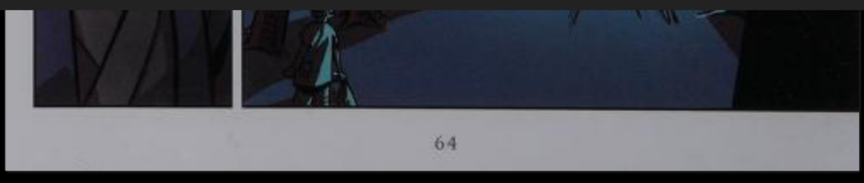

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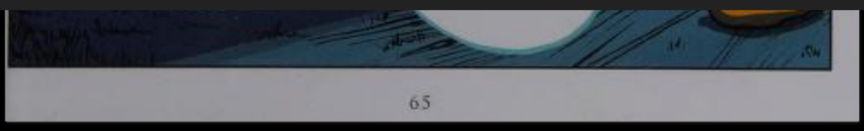

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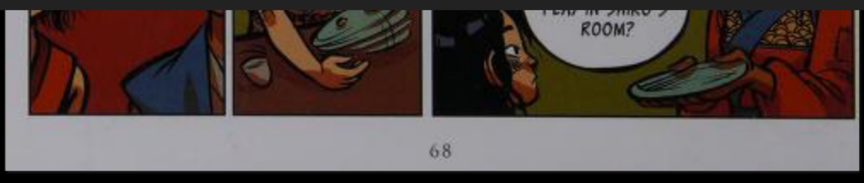

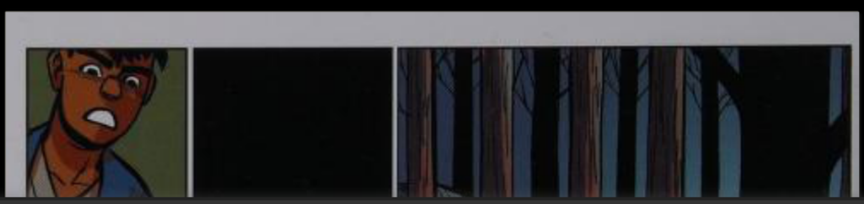

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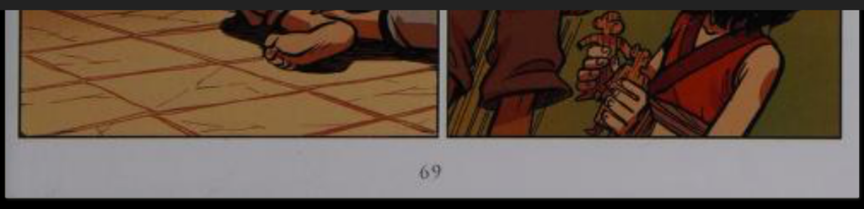

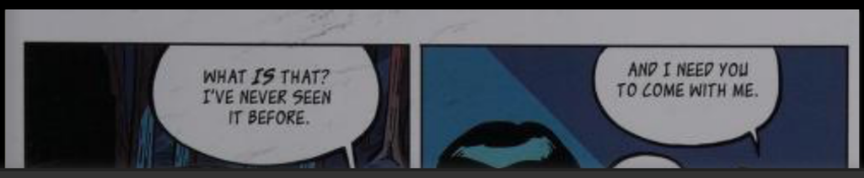

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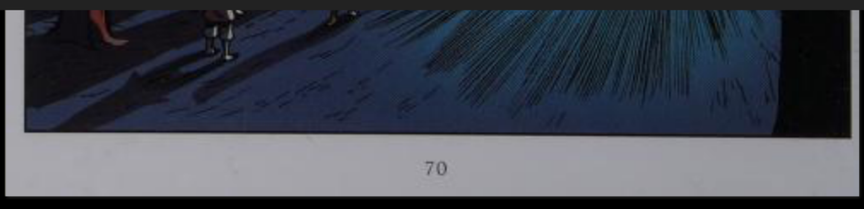

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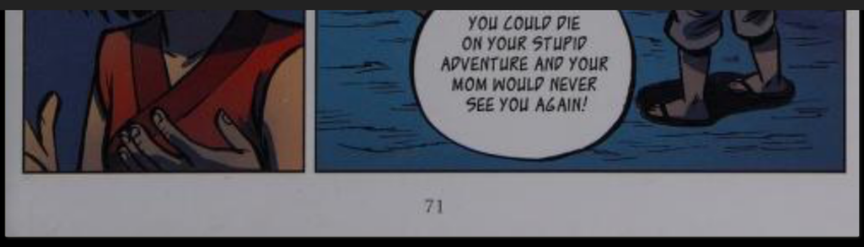

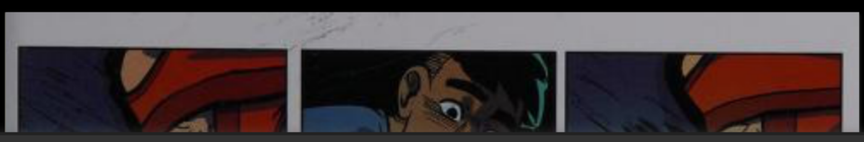

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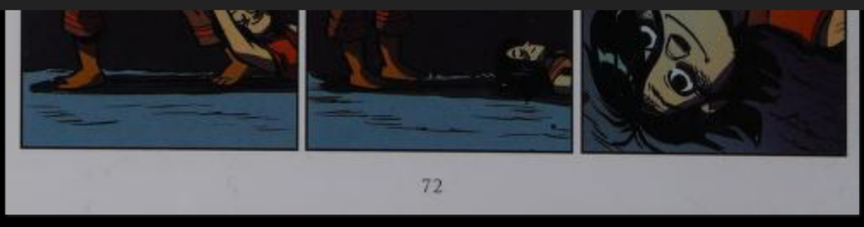

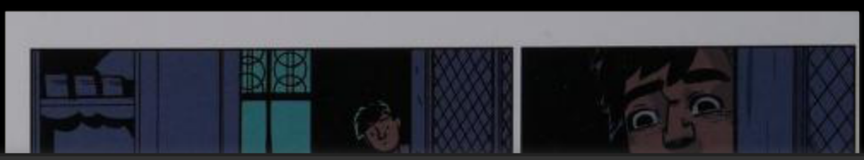

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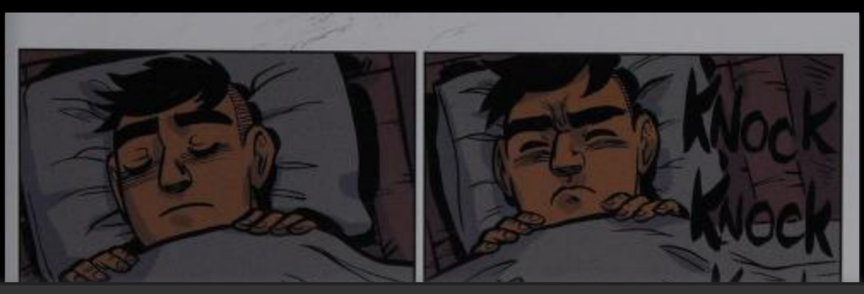

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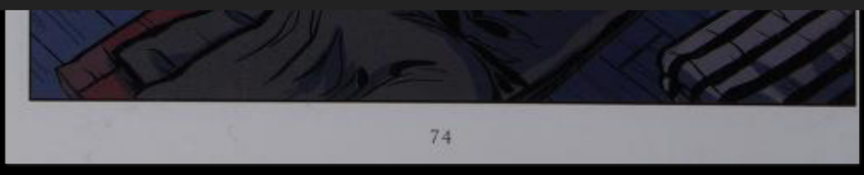

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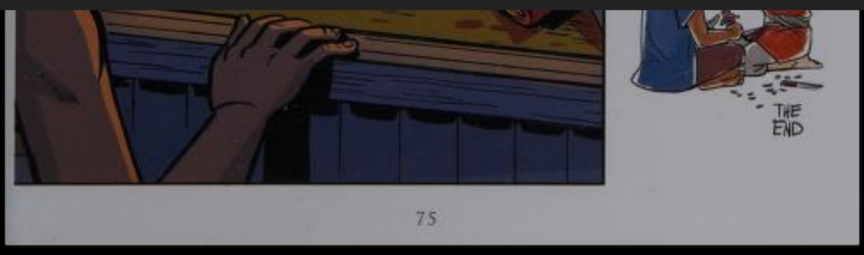

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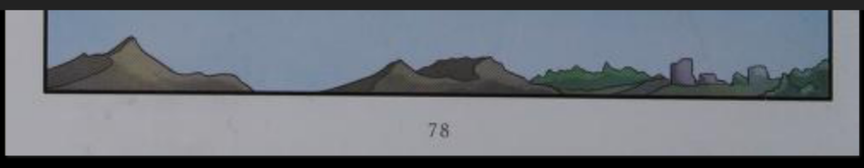

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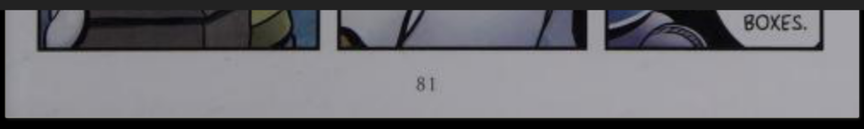

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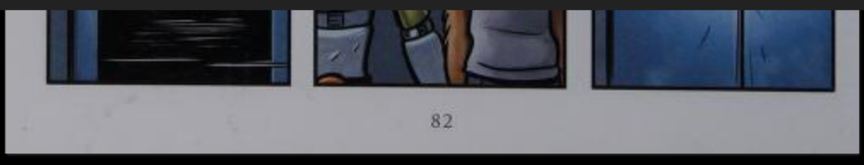

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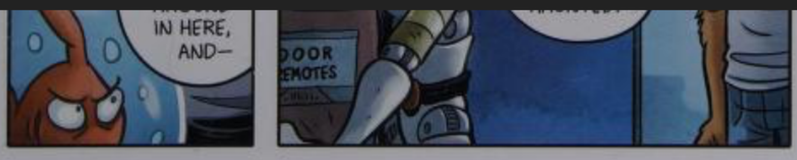

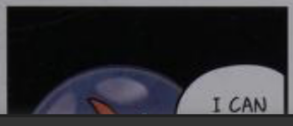

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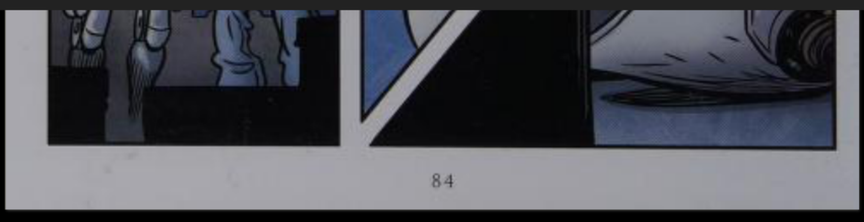

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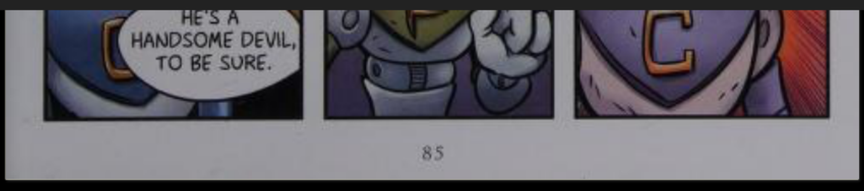

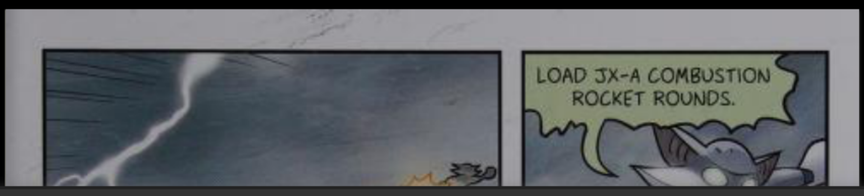

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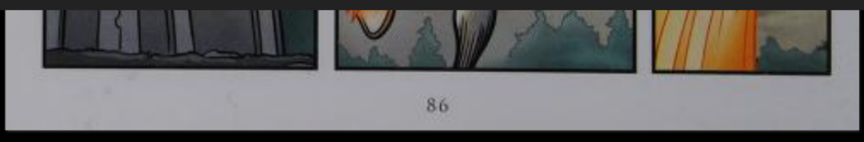

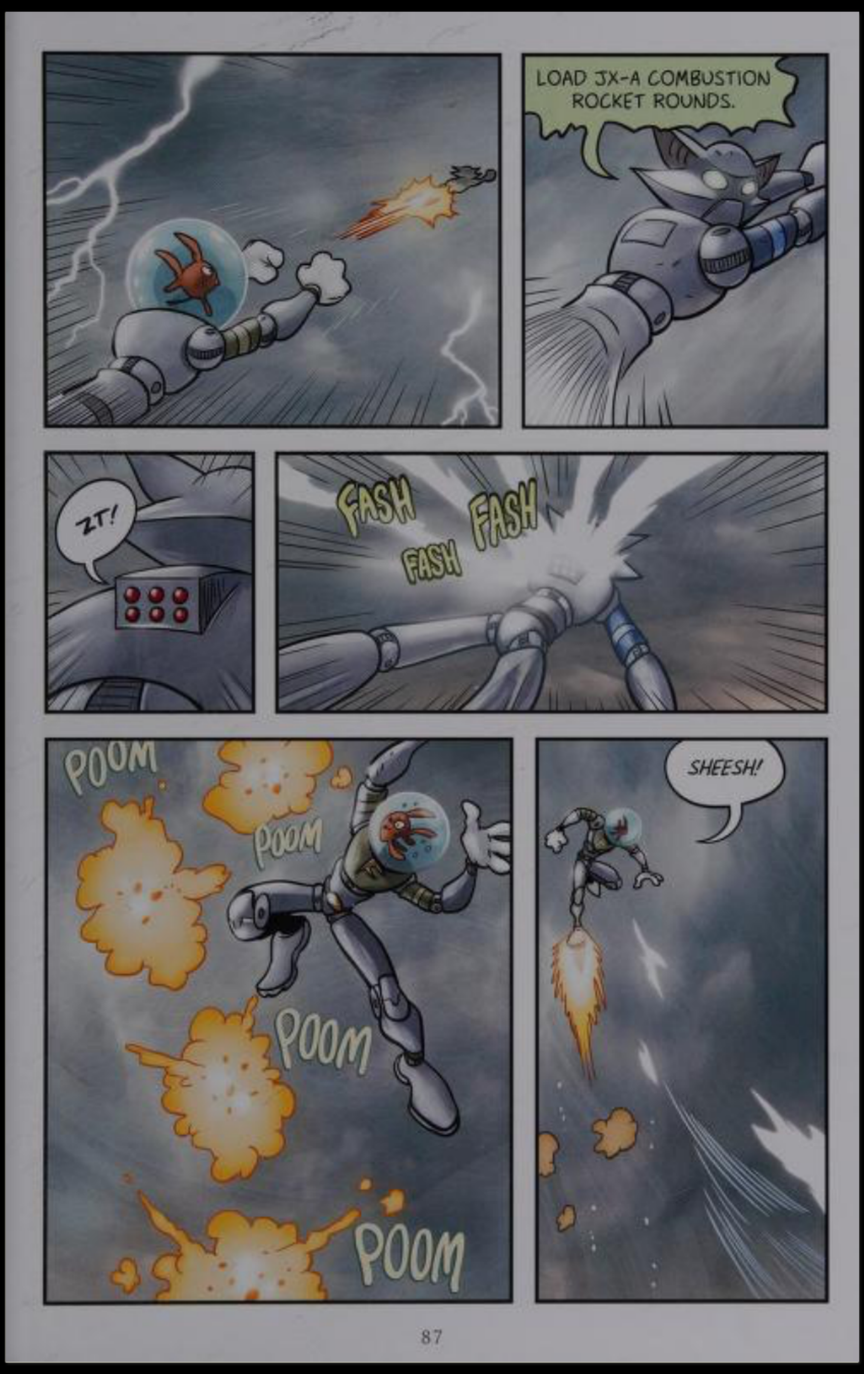

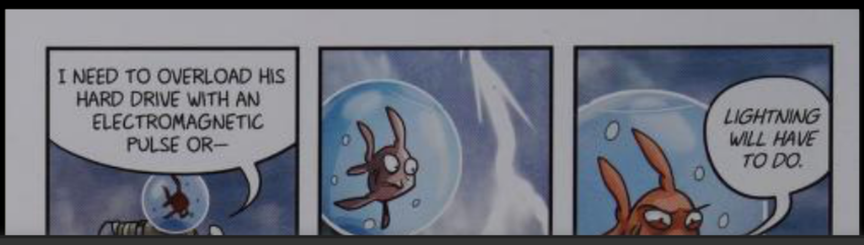

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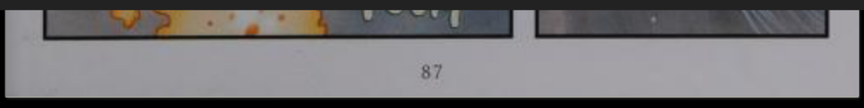

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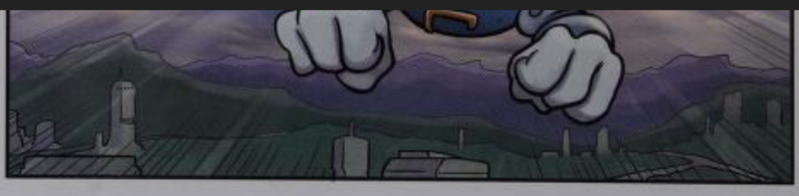

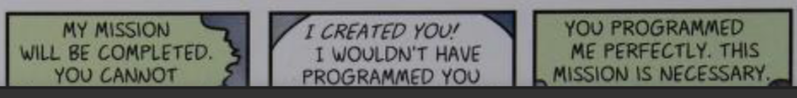

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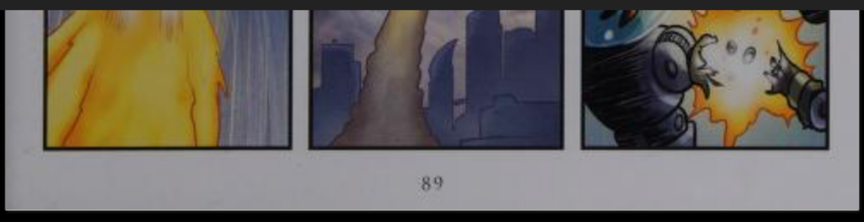

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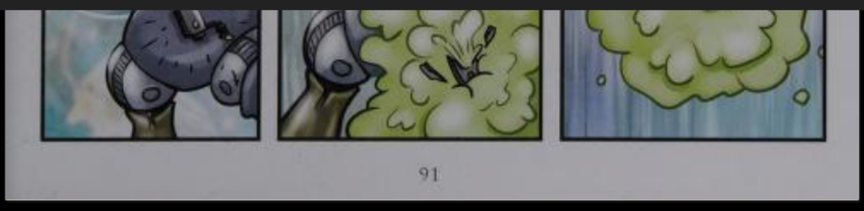

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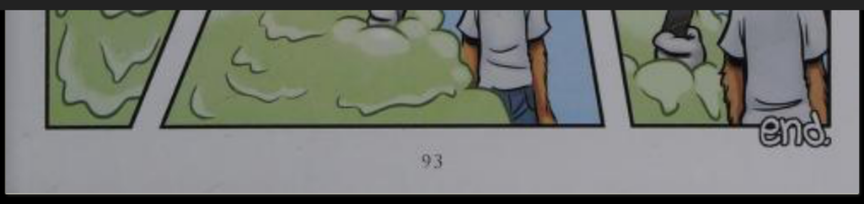

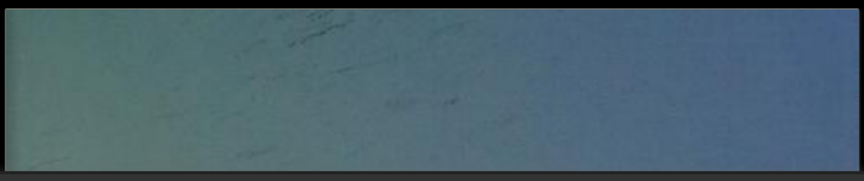

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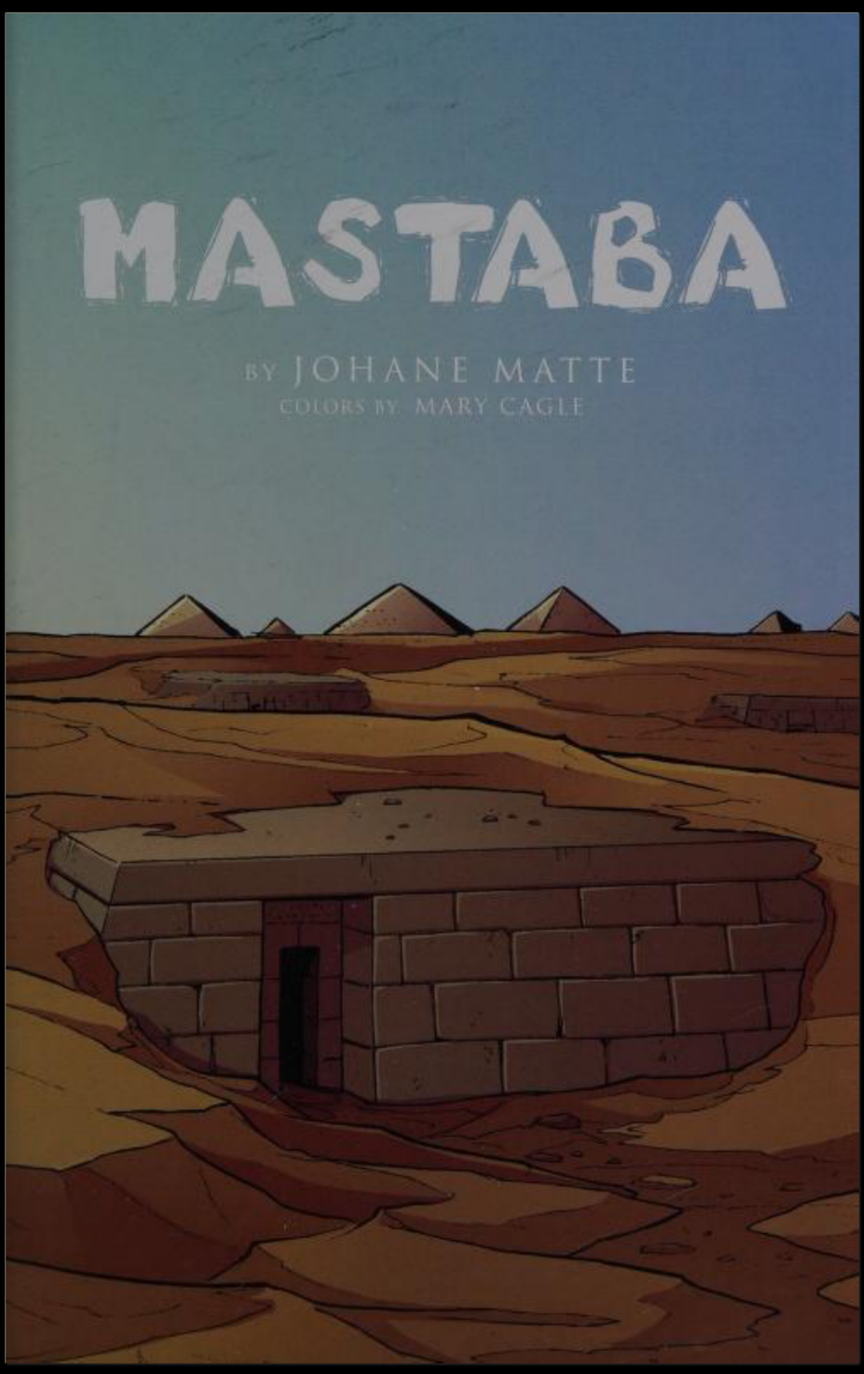

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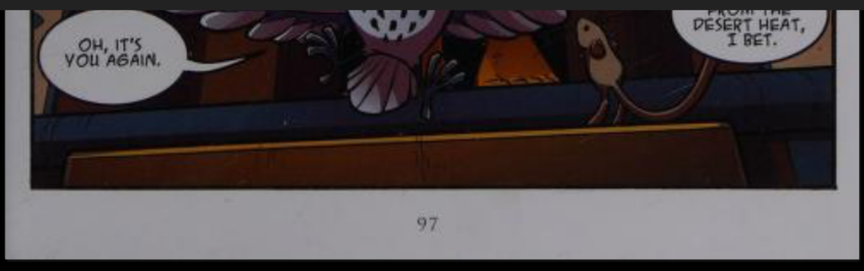

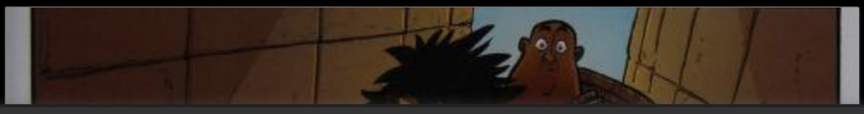

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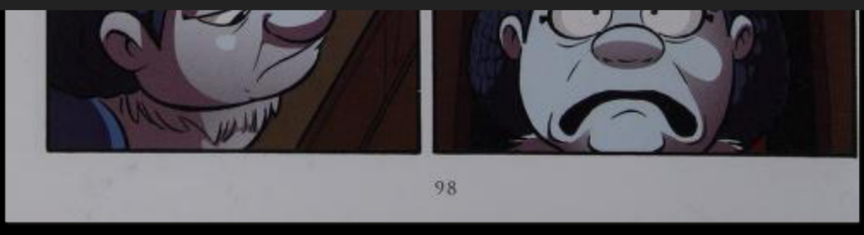

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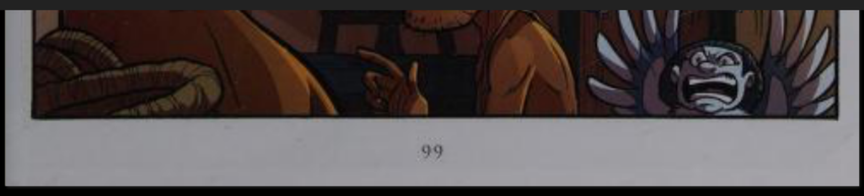

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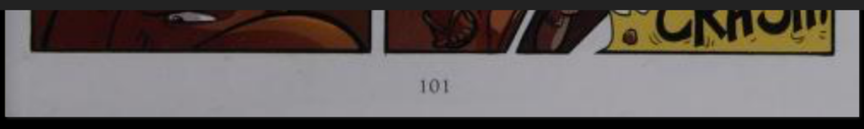

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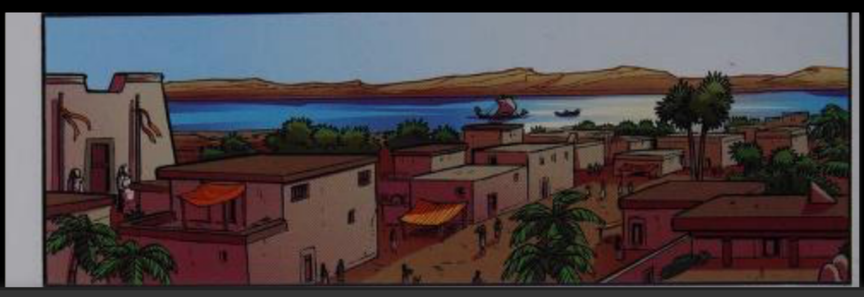

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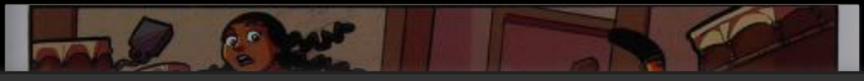

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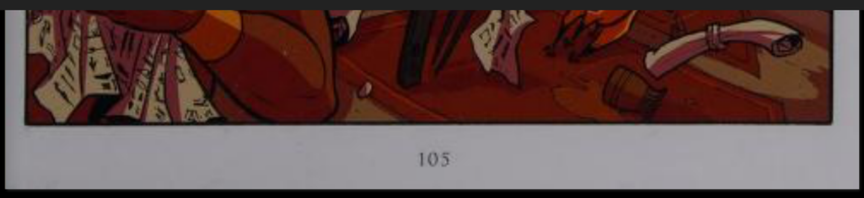

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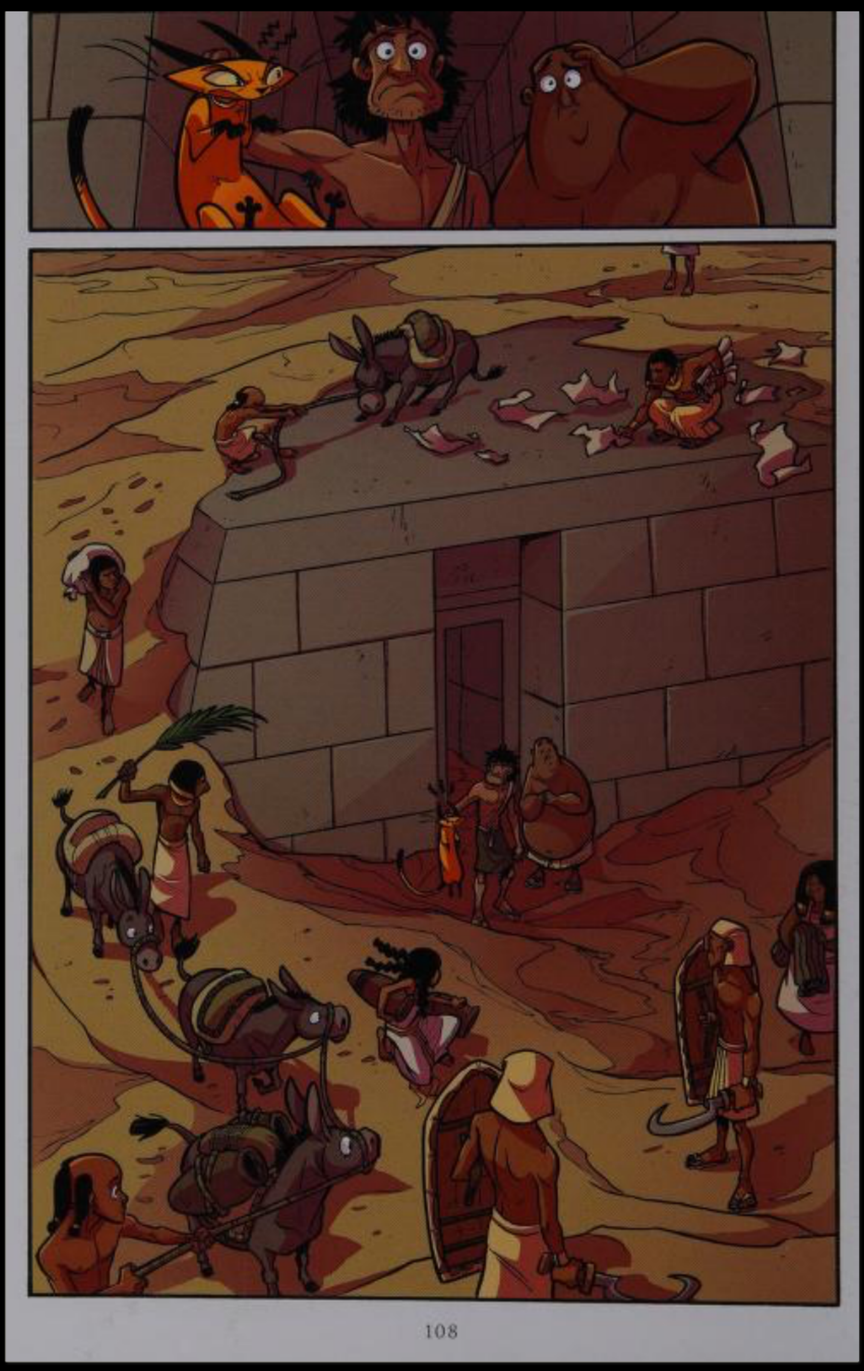

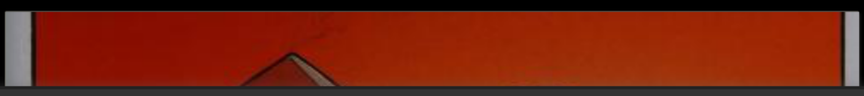

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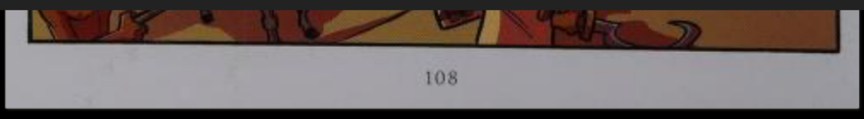

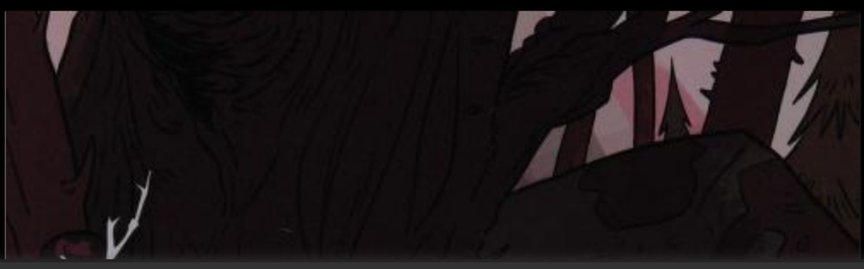

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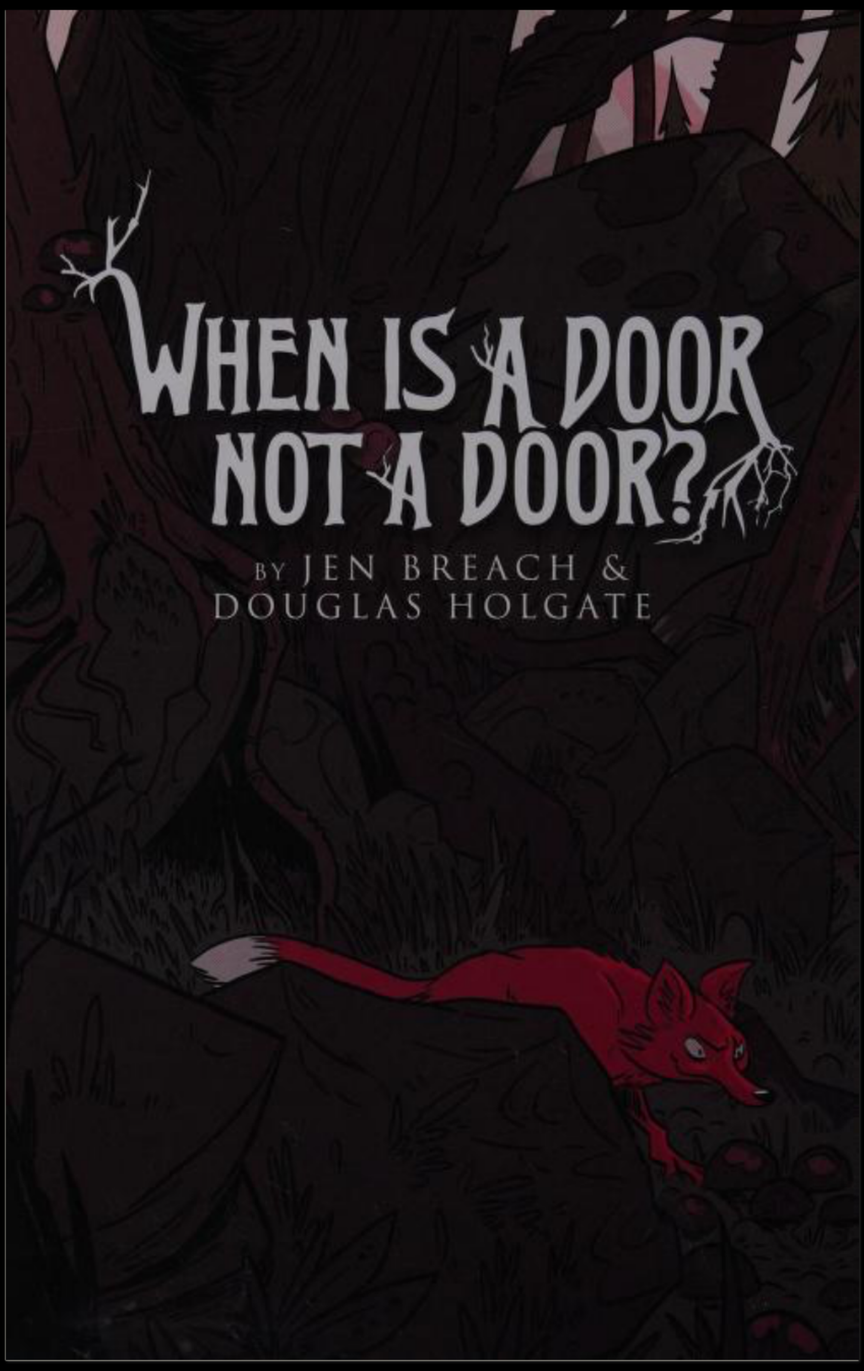

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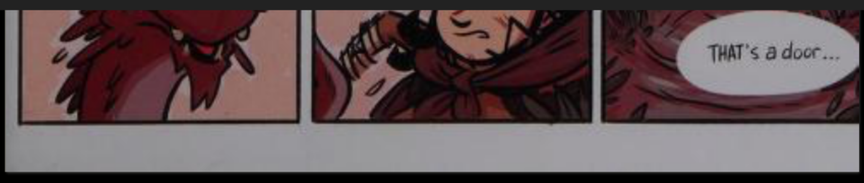

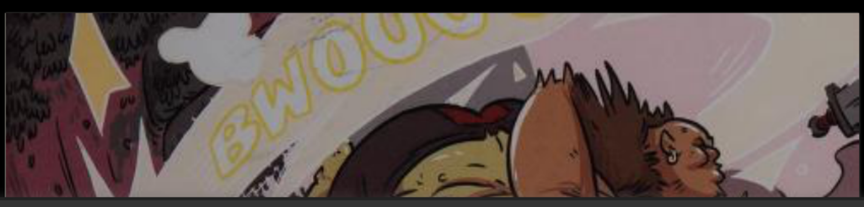

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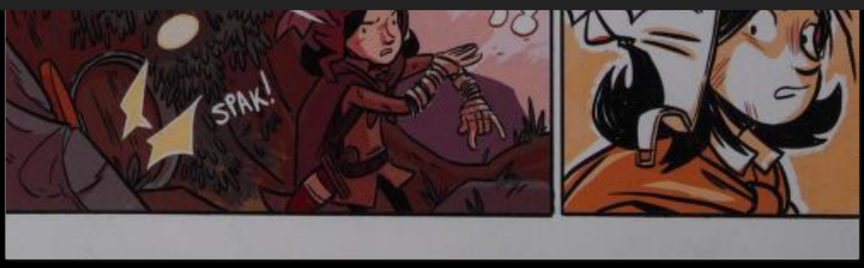

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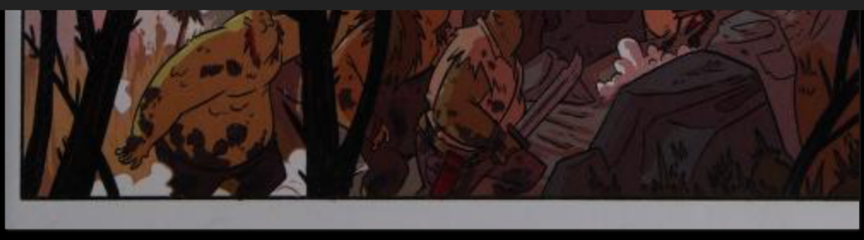

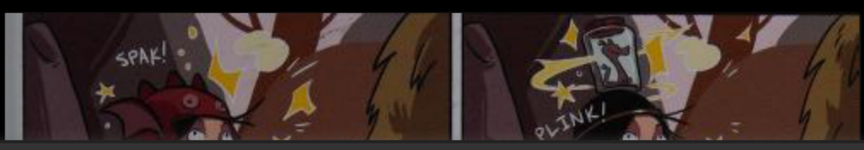

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ABOUT THE CREATORS

KAZU KIBUISHI is the creator of the *New York Times* bestselling graphic novel series *Amulet*, was also the editor and art director of eight volumes of *Flight*, the groundbreaking Eisner-nomina graphic anthology. His comics collection *Copper* was a Junior Library Guild selection, and his de graphic novel, *Daisy Kutter*, was named a YALSA Best Book for Young Adults. He recently created co art for the new paperback editions of J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. Find out more about Kazu boltcity.com.

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JEN BREACH is a former archaeologist and librarian originally from Melbourne, Australia. R more of her writing, including her comics project with Douglas Holgate, *Maralinga*, at jenbreach.co

JASON CAFFOE, coeditor of the *Explorer* anthologies, is also a contributor to *Explorer: The Mys Boxes*, *Explorer: The Lost Islands*, and the *Flight* anthologies. He is the lead production assistant for *Amulet* series. Visit him at jcaffoe.tumblr.com.

STEVE HAMAKER is the Eisner- and Harvey Award–nominated colorist of the *Bone* graphic no series by Jeff Smith. Other coloring work includes Coldplay's *Mylo Xyloto* comic series and *Table Ti* by Scott Kurtz. Links to more of his work can be found at steve-hamaker.com.

FAITH ERIN HICKS's previous works include *The War at Ellsmere*, *Friends with Boys*, *Nothing Possibly Go Wrong* (with Prudence Shen), and the Eisner-nominated *The Adventures of Superhero Girl*. lives in Nova Scotia. To see more of her art, check out faitherinhicks.com.

DOUGLAS HOLGATE is the illustrator of many books and comics for kids, including *File: 13*, *Planet Tad*, *Cheesie Mack*, and *Zinc Alloy*. He lives in Australia. Find Douglas on your compute www.skullduggery.com.au.

JOHANE MATTE is a storyboard artist at DreamWorks Animation. Her work appeared in *Expl The Mystery Boxes* and several volumes of *Flight*. Her credits as a storyboard artist include the movies *H to Train Your Dragon* and *Rise of the Guardians* and the TV series *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. Check out her at rufftoon.tumblr.com.

JEN WANG is a writer and illustrator living in Los Angeles. She's the creator of the graphic no *Koko Be Good* and *In Real Life*, co-written by Cory Doctorow. Explore more of Jen's work at jenwang.

MARY CAGLE colored "Mastaba." She is a comics artist and illustrator and a graduate of the Savan College of Art and Design.

DENVER JACKSON helped color "Asteria Crane." He is a filmmaker, animator, and comics artist fr Victoria, B.C.

NOREEN RANA colored "Two-Person Door." She is a Toronto-based freelance illustrator and u interface designer.

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